

IMPLEMENTING THE FEDERAL SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL PROGRAM:  
EVALUATING FLORIDA'S DECENTRALIZED PROCESS

By

LAUREN DELARCO

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To my loving parents

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|                                                                                                   | <u>page</u> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....                                                                             | 4           |
| LIST OF TABLES .....                                                                              | 7           |
| LIST OF FIGURES .....                                                                             | 8           |
| LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....                                                                        | 9           |
| ABSTRACT.....                                                                                     | 10          |
| CHAPTER                                                                                           |             |
| 1 INTRODUCTION .....                                                                              | 12          |
| 2 BACKGROUND .....                                                                                | 15          |
| Unhealthy Children.....                                                                           | 15          |
| Federal SRTS Program .....                                                                        | 17          |
| Funding Levels & Allocation .....                                                                 | 18          |
| State Program Structure & Administration .....                                                    | 19          |
| Florida’s Statewide Program .....                                                                 | 20          |
| 3 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE: DECENTRALIZED IMPLEMENTATION AND<br>INTER-ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTS..... | 24          |
| Implementation.....                                                                               | 24          |
| Top Down vs. Bottom Up.....                                                                       | 25          |
| Top-Down Models.....                                                                              | 26          |
| Bottom-Up Models .....                                                                            | 27          |
| Moving Past Top-Down vs. Bottom-Up: Organizational Theory .....                                   | 28          |
| Intra-Organizational Effects .....                                                                | 28          |
| Inter-Organization .....                                                                          | 30          |
| Summary.....                                                                                      | 31          |
| 4 METHODOLOGY .....                                                                               | 32          |
| Study Design and Methodology .....                                                                | 32          |
| Interviews .....                                                                                  | 33          |
| Project Distribution Analysis.....                                                                | 35          |
| 5 THE EFFECTS OF FEDERAL AND STATE MANDATES .....                                                 | 36          |
| Federal Legislation .....                                                                         | 36          |
| Eligible Recipients.....                                                                          | 36          |

|   |                                                                                                                            |    |
|---|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
|   | Fund Reimbursement.....                                                                                                    | 37 |
|   | Tile 23 Regulations.....                                                                                                   | 38 |
|   | State Guidelines.....                                                                                                      | 39 |
|   | LAP Requirements.....                                                                                                      | 40 |
|   | Five Year Work Program.....                                                                                                | 42 |
|   | Applicants & Applications.....                                                                                             | 43 |
| 6 | DISTRICT LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION & SRTS PROJECT DISTRIBUTION.....                                                             | 48 |
|   | Apportionment and Commitment.....                                                                                          | 48 |
|   | Allocation, Demographics and Equity.....                                                                                   | 50 |
|   | Infrastructure Investments.....                                                                                            | 50 |
|   | Non-Infrastructure Investments.....                                                                                        | 51 |
|   | Summary.....                                                                                                               | 54 |
| 7 | DISCUSSION.....                                                                                                            | 67 |
|   | Discussion of Finding and Methods.....                                                                                     | 67 |
|   | Barriers Created by the Federal Law & State Guidelines.....                                                                | 67 |
|   | Decentralization: Benefits & Trade-offs.....                                                                               | 69 |
|   | Benefits.....                                                                                                              | 69 |
|   | Trade-Offs.....                                                                                                            | 71 |
|   | Recommendations.....                                                                                                       | 71 |
|   | Funding.....                                                                                                               | 72 |
|   | Application.....                                                                                                           | 72 |
|   | Non-Infrastructure Partnerships.....                                                                                       | 73 |
|   | Reschedule Infrastructure and Non-Infrastructure Timelines to coincide with the<br>School Year and Project Completion..... | 73 |
| 8 | CONCLUSIONS.....                                                                                                           | 75 |
|   | LIST OF REFERENCES.....                                                                                                    | 77 |
|   | BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.....                                                                                                   | 80 |

LIST OF TABLES

| <u>Table</u>                                                              | <u>page</u> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| 6-1 FDOT District Apportioned and Committed SRTS Funds.....               | 57          |
| 6-2 SRTS Apportioned and Committed Non-Infrastructure Portion (10%) ..... | 58          |
| 6-3 SRTS Apportioned and Committed Infrastructure Portion (70%) .....     | 58          |
| 6-4 SRTS Apportioned and Committed Flexible Spending Portion (20%) .....  | 59          |
| 6-5 Florida SRTS Infrastructure Funding by County.....                    | 60          |
| 6-6 District 1 Population and SRTS Project Data .....                     | 61          |
| 6-7 District 2 Population and SRTS Project Data .....                     | 62          |
| 6-8 District 3 Population and SRTS Project Data .....                     | 63          |
| 6-9 District 4 Population and SRTS Project Data .....                     | 64          |
| 6-10 District 5 Population and SRTS Project Data .....                    | 65          |
| 6-11 District 6 Population and SRTS Project Data .....                    | 66          |
| 6-12 District 7 Population and SRTS Project Data .....                    | 66          |

## LIST OF FIGURES

| <u>Figure</u>                                                                                  | <u>page</u> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| 2-2 Map of FDOT District Boundaries and Counties Contained Within.....                         | 23          |
| 5-1 Florida Certified LAP Agencies .....                                                       | 47          |
| 6-1 Map of Florida’s SRTS Project Distribution .....                                           | 55          |
| 6-2 Florida Traffic and Bicycle Safety Education Program Trainings by County and District..... | 56          |

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

|            |                                                                                    |
|------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| CDC        | Center for Disease Control and Prevention                                          |
| EPA        | Environmental Protection Agency                                                    |
| FBTSE      | Florida Bicycle & Traffic Safety Education                                         |
| FDOE       | Florida Department of Education                                                    |
| FDOT       | Florida Department of Transportation                                               |
| 5YWP       | Five Year Work Program                                                             |
| ISTEA      | Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act                                   |
| NEPA       | National Environmental Protection Act                                              |
| ROW        | Right-of-Way                                                                       |
| SAFETEA-LU | Safe, Accountable, and Equitable Transportation Efficiency Act: A Legacy for Users |
| SRTS       | Safe Routes to School                                                              |
| STIP       | State Transportation Improvement Plan                                              |
| TIP        | Transportation Improvement Program                                                 |

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Lauren DeLarco

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The Federal Safe Routes to School Program is gaining momentum across the nation. As society begins to recognize the important health and environmental benefits associated with children's active commuting to school communities are trying to find safe and fun ways to encourage children to return to the longstanding activity of walking and bicycling to school. Safe Routes to School provides funding for investment in infrastructure and non-infrastructure projects in all fifty states.

Recent research by the National Center for Safe Routes to School Implementation Working Group (2009) observed implementation barriers created by the federal statute that may be deterring local participation. Florida, while abiding by the Federal Statutes, has further decentralized their program creating a multi-level system hierarchal system of implementation. This study aims to identify the impacts of the Federal Safe Routes to School policy mandates and Florida's state guidelines and the interactions created by Florida's unique decentralized framework.

Local implementer and stakeholder interviews were conducted to understand how policy mandates and organizational frameworks affect the implementation and outcomes of an

intervention. Further analysis of the apportioned and committed funds by district and county reveal the effects of the varied implementation strategies recorded in the interviews and the geographic distribution of infrastructure and non-infrastructure investments across the State.

The findings of the study reveal time-cost impediments associated with organizational challenges resulting from the federal mandates and state guidelines; however, the decentralized framework provides some relief by distributing project administration across multiple actors. In addition, equity issues experience in some urban, suburban, and rural regions of centralized programs are not experienced in Florida due to regional apportionment.

## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

The trend in children walking and biking to school has been declining for more than thirty-five years. According to the National Household Travel Survey in 1969, almost half of all students walked or bicycled to school (USDOT Federal Highway Safety Administration 2002). Today, only 10% of children nationwide walk to school regularly. Children have grown increasingly dependent on vehicular modes of travel to get to and from school and the effects are becoming widespread. Increased traffic congestion, poor air quality, and a lack of daily physical activity are all results of this shift in behavior.

The Federal Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program is a national movement to create safe, convenient, and fun opportunities for children to bicycle and walk to and from school. Aiming to reverse the decline in active commuting, SRTS empowers the state and local community to become involved and encourage active commuting to school by offering grant funds to eligible applicants for infrastructure and non-infrastructure projects that make it safer and easier to walk and bicycle to school regularly ([www.saferoutespartnership.org](http://www.saferoutespartnership.org)).

It has now been four years since the authorization of the SRTS program and recent research shows that the methods chosen to implement the program have a substantial effect on the outcomes observed. The National Center for SRTS released its quarterly tracking brief in June 2009 reporting a total of 66% of the \$596 million available nationwide in SRTS funds has been obligated since 2005. Further, the SRTS National Partnership Working Group on Implementation (2009) released a report examining the implementation challenges being met across the nation. Among those repeatedly mentioned was the Congress enforced Title 23 regulations placed on infrastructure projects, project costs and timing, and project delivery. Several other issues have been documented by researchers at the University of Florida and the

University of North Carolina (research in progress 2009) tentatively showing success at the State and Local level may be dependent on inter-organizational collaboration. Some of these obstacles are inherent to the legislation and others are the product of multi-actor implementation.

Florida, unlike any other state, has organized its Statewide SRTS Program in a decentralized manner giving the seven Department of Transportation (DOT) districts responsibility of allocation at the local level. Implementation in the majority of states represents one central decision-making body at the state level that adheres to the federal guidelines of the enacting legislation. Florida adds a third level of decision-making in granting the seven districts responsibility of soliciting projects, evaluating and awarding applicants, and overseeing project execution.

The primary purpose of this paper is to uncover the benefits and barrier associated with the decentralized implementation of the SRTS program in Florida through interviews with district coordinators, eligible applicants and advocacy organizations within the seven FDOT districts. Further, the researcher examines how the multitude of actors and organizations taking part in the SRTS program impacts the efficiency of implementation and stakeholder participation.

The thesis is divided into seven chapters. Chapter 2 first reviews issues in school siting and children's active commute to school and next outlines the SRTS Program objectives and authorization in a top-down format from the Federal Legislation to the local level's processes. Chapter 3 examines the literature written on implementation theory and the effects of decentralized methods in policy analysis. The comprehensive nature of the literature reviewed examines the scope of outcomes based on the inner-workings of the organization administering the program and the availability of resources. Chapter 4 discusses the methodology used to capture the perceived effects of decentralized implementation. The federal mandates and state

guidelines will be outlined in Chapter 5 along with the local implementer's reactions and perspectives of the impact on implementation revealed in researcher conducted interviews. Chapter 6 analyses project distribution across the seven districts and counties to identify funding and demographic trends. Finally Chapter 7 discusses the implications of these findings in relation to the literature reviewed and makes recommendations for further consideration.

## CHAPTER 2 BACKGROUND

This chapter provides the reader with a summary of each of the negative health and environmental implications arising from the decline in children's active commuting to school. Next, the Federal SRTS Program legislation and its objectives will be reviewed to provide the reader with a basic understanding of the program.

### **Unhealthy Children**

Many adults remember walking to school as a child but were completely unaware of the health benefits associated with it. Society has generally accepted the medical health benefits related to adult physical activity and chronic disease prevention, yet the disconcerting decline in children's health and physical activity has gone unnoticed until recently. Interest in the assessment and promotion of children's physical activity has been stimulated as documented evidence shows an alarming generation of unhealthy children on the horizon (Troiano et al., 1995).

The rates of childhood obesity have more than doubled in the past twenty years. Medical researchers have pointed out several factors at fault including diet and genetic predisposition, however, the decline in physical activity and shifting lifestyle trends are identified as the main culprit. (National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997) According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention (2009), over 9 million children in this country are overweight or obese – a number that has tripled since 1980. A more sedentary lifestyle, consisting of activities such as computer games and television, when paired with a high sugar diet results in an imbalanced energy ratio where calories consumed are not offset by physical exertion. In addition to regulating weight physical activity also reduces the risk for certain cancers, diabetes, and high blood pressure and contributes to healthy bones and muscles (CDC 2009).

Tudor-Locke et al.. (2001) found that active commuting to school is a potential source of continuous moderate to vigorous intensity activity for children but has been largely ignored. In 2001, an estimated 13 % of children walked or bicycled to school comparing to almost 50% in 1969 (USDOT, 2001). Community surveys typically show the common mode of transportation to and from school to be by bus or a private vehicle. The obvious reason for this shift is increasing distances between the home and school although, evidence shows that even those children living within a reasonable distance of school, considered as 2 miles, have higher rates of motor vehicle commutes today than they did in the past. Research conducted by Noreen McDonald at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill (2009), show 75% of parents driving their children less than 2 miles to school cited the time-cost advantage of driving over walking.

With a mere 13% of students walking or biking to school the remainder are being bused or dropped off by single occupant vehicles. As a result traffic congestion is increasing and air quality is decreasing. It is estimated that as much as 20 to 30% of morning traffic is generated by parents driving their children to schools (Dubay 2003). Increasing traffic volumes around schools put children walking and bicycling at a higher risk of pedestrian crashes. The National Highway Transportation & Safety Administration (2002) estimates half of children struck by cars near schools are hit by parents driving other children to school.

With every vehicle mile driven to schools pollutants are emitted into the air that children breathe in and around their schools. Medical research argues a significant link between chronic respiratory conditions and air quality. Evidence strongly supports the claim that reducing air pollution from vehicles can prevent health conditions in children. Children exposed to traffic pollution are more likely to have asthma, permanent lung deficits, and a higher risk of heart and lung problems as adults (Gauderman et al. 2005). A significant decrease in driving during the

1996 Olympic Games reduced ambient ozone levels by 27.9 % and emergency room visits for asthma fell by 41.6 % (Friedman et al. 2001).

In an effort to reverse the negative implications associated with the declining trends in children's active transportation to school the Federal Government developed the Safe Routes to School Program (SRTS). SRTS was enacted as part of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) in 2005 to empower State and Local Governments to invest in infrastructure and education projects that directly improve safety so children may walk and bicycle to school on a daily basis once again. The program aims to increase physical activity levels among school-aged children while concurrently decreasing traffic levels and air pollution.

### **Federal SRTS Program**

The purpose of the SRTS program, as outlined in Section 1404 of the enacting legislation, is to (1) enable and encourage children, including those with disabilities to walk and bicycle to school; (2) to make bicycling and walking to school a safer and more appealing transportation alternative, thereby encouraging a healthy and active lifestyle from an early age; and (3) to facilitate the planning, development, and implementation of projects and activities that will improve safety and reduce traffic, fuel consumption, and air pollution in the vicinity of schools.

The federal government has committed \$612 million over five fiscal years to fully fund the implementation of infrastructure and non-infrastructure projects in and around schools. Funding for infrastructure-related activities include any project that improves the ability for students to walk and bicycle to school, including sidewalk construction or maintenance, installation of traffic calming and speed reducing devices, pedestrian and bicycle crossing improvements, on and off street bicycle and pedestrian facilities including secure bicycle

parking, and traffic diversion improvement within the vicinity of schools. “Vicinity” as defined by the federal legislation restricts the location of projects to the “walking and bicycling area” or approximately within a 2 mile radius of a school.

Non-infrastructure related activities are less restricted in their implementation strategies because educational components are more subjective to local and school context. All non-infrastructure projects should encourage walking and bicycling to school through educational programs with teachers, parents, and students, public awareness campaigns, coordination with the media and community leaders, and training sessions for volunteers and managers of SRTS programs at the local level.

FHWA encourages projects to comprehensively address each component commonly referred to as the 5 E’s: ([safety.fhwa.dot.gov](http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov))

1. Engineering - Creating operational and physical improvements to the infrastructure surrounding schools that reduce speeds and potential conflicts with motor vehicle traffic, and establish safer and fully accessible crossings, walkways, trails and bikeways.
2. Education - Teaching children about the broad range of transportation choices, instructing them in important lifelong bicycling and walking safety skills, and launching driver safety campaigns in the vicinity of schools.
3. Encouragement - Using events and activities to promote walking and bicycling.
4. Enforcement - Partnering with local law enforcement to ensure traffic laws are obeyed in the vicinity of schools (this includes enforcement of speeds, yielding to pedestrians in crossings, and proper walking and bicycling behaviors), and initiating community enforcement such as crossing guard programs.
5. Evaluation - Monitoring and documenting outcomes and trends through the collection of data, including the collection of data before and after the intervention(s).

## **Funding Levels & Allocation**

The SRTS program is executed as a contract authority program. This means the federal government dedicates funding to the States based on the allocation formula of the authorizing act

in advance of appropriations. The federal government reimburses the state for the actual cost of the project once the Department of Treasury appropriates the funds. The bulk of this cash is provided in one account to the State who is then responsible for reimbursing the responsible party.

The state apportionment calculation is based on a ratio of (A.) the total student enrollment in primary and middle schools in each state, compared to (B.) to total student enrollment in primary and middle schools in all states. Regardless of the apportionment ratio no state shall receive less than \$1,000,000 per fiscal year. Before the apportionment calculation is applied no more than \$3,000,000 is set aside for the administrative costs associated with the apportionment of and administration of state funding (SAFETEA-LU, §1404(c)).

All state programs are required to apportion funds for the two different types of funds. Awarding of infrastructure projects shall account for 70 % of the apportioned funds. Non-infrastructure projects account for 10 % of the awarded funding and the remaining 20 % is flexible funding to be allocated for either infrastructure or non-infrastructure projects depending on the local need (SAFETEA-LU, §1404(f)).

### **State Program Structure & Administration**

The Federal Legislation includes a number of mandates addressing the development of the Statewide Program but also grants a level of sovereignty for flexibility at the street-level. The policy recognizes that states vary in size and demographics so States are encouraged to develop innovative strategies that will engage the target group. Because there is a non-infrastructure component to the program, states are advised to take a multidisciplinary approach that involves the coordination of organizations that can provide support in achieving the desired intervention.

In 2005 the US Department of Transportation's Acting Associate Administrator, John R. Baxter, issued a memorandum ordering the designation of a full-time Safe Routes to School

Coordinator within each State Department of Transportation by the end of 2006 ([safety.fhwa.dot.gov](http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov)). Where the DOT places this position within the organization is a State DOT decision although they are strongly encouraged to be placed with the existing State Bicycle and Pedestrian Division due to the substantial coordination needed to take place for each project.

State Coordinators are expected to supervise the implementation of the statewide program as well as act as the central point of contact for both prospective applicants and the federal government. The US DOT envisions hired state coordinators to work effectively with other state departments as well as non-traditional partners such as hospitals, non-profits, and community groups. The funding for the coordinator position is set aside from the infrastructure portion of the funding.

### **Florida's Statewide Program**

Florida's SRTS program is designed to achieve the same goals set forth in the federal legislation including, facilitating the planning, development, and implementation of projects that will improve safety in the vicinity of schools. Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has received approximately \$29.1 million of Federal SRTS funds to be allocated across seven regional districts. Florida receives the fourth highest apportionment behind California at \$67.5 million, Texas with \$44.7 million, and New York with \$36.1 million in SRTS funding ([www.saferoutespartnership.org](http://www.saferoutespartnership.org)).

Florida's SRTS program, unlike any other state, is decentralized across the seven districts consistent with FDOT's overall framework. Refer to Figure 1.1 for a map of the FDOT districts. As a decentralized agency the central office, housed in Tallahassee, is responsible for developing policies and procedures and providing quality assurance while it's seven district offices and Florida's Turnpike Enterprise are responsible for the planning, contracting and building of

roadways and bridges within their boundaries. District coordinators are responsible for the awarding and implementation of the SRTS project funds within their respected regions.

Florida's SRTS State Coordinator, Pat Pieratte, has been with the program since its enactment in 2005. Pat supervises the progress of each district and acts as the transitional gateway between the federal proceedings and their translated implications at the local level. In addition, Pat aims to increase awareness and inter-organizational participation by working with statewide organizations that possess aligning goals.

Each district has appointed SRTS coordinators to administer the SRTS funding through a competitive application process and to oversee the proper execution of projects awarded. Appointed non-infrastructure coordinators are either the district's Safety Program Manager or Safety Engineer primarily for their familiarity with FHWA regulations and building and construction procedures. The majority of districts have expanded the responsibilities of the Community Traffic Safety Team (CTST) Coordinator to include the administration of SRTS non-infrastructure projects. CTSTs are locally based groups of traffic safety advocates who are committed to solving transportation safety issues through a multi-jurisdictional and multi-disciplinary approach. One of the main objectives of the CTST is to reduce the number of injuries and fatalities resulting from traffic crashes within the community. Participants include city, county, and state agencies in addition to private industry representatives and interested local citizens ([www.dot.state.fl.us](http://www.dot.state.fl.us)). The CTST Coordinator works closely with this group, so he/she is able to efficiently solicit non-infrastructure projects that further advance the purpose of the organization. Two of the seven districts have assigned the responsibility to the district's Pedestrian/ Bicycle Coordinator who work in close coordination with several advocacy groups so project solicitation is reaching far into the community.

This decentralized framework adds a third level of decision-making at the local level which may or may not have a significant impact on the programs successes or lack thereof. Most state SRTS programs have a central framework where the state DOT office handles the administration and execution of the project. In this framework there are only two critical decision-making points, at the federal and at the central state level. Florida's framework adds a third level of decision-making at the district level in addition to numerous decision-makers. Understanding these effects is critical to the future of the SRTS program and its acceptance within varying contexts.

The following chapter will review the literature of implementation theory and how decentralizing the program impacts the overall success of the intended interventions. The literature reviewed only scrapes the surface of policy analysis research, but in effort to not digress too far from the focal point of the thesis the main arguments surrounding the top-down vs. bottom-up models will be presented, in addition to the ambiguity model that reconciles the mutual dependence of both models.



CHAPTER 3  
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE: DECENTRALIZED IMPLEMENTATION AND INTER-  
ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTS

The actions of policy and program implementation have the ability to drastically distort the intended outcomes. Subject to variables of personal bias and perception interjected by street-level implementers, policy interventions can result in failure if the institutions and the people implementing them are not considered in the formulating stages. This chapter begins by defining implementation as regarded in program evaluation, and goes on to review the literature pertaining to decentralized implementation of socio-political policies and the effects of inter-organizational participation on outcomes of interventions.

**Implementation**

The proliferation of research surrounding implementation theory continues to be challenged by questions asking whether a program works, why, and under what circumstances. Many examples of policy and program intervention report no effects when, in reality the shortcomings are the result of implementation failure. Implementation is the action taken by individuals or groups to achieve the objectives and goals set forth in policy decisions. It is best explained by Williams who states:

In its most general form, an inquiry about implementation... seeks to determine whether an organization can bring together men and material in a cohesive organizational unit and motivate them in such a way as to carry out the organization's stated objectives. (1971; p. 144)

Several theories and variables of implementation have been proposed since implementation research began in the late 1960s but none have been agreed upon by more than one researcher (O-Toole 1986). What can be observed is that implementation has emerged as a confluence of social and decision sciences that bear upon policymaking. Consideration of the technical, political, and economic feasibilities of attaining the intended outcome is necessary within the

stages of policy formulation. Implementation is in fact a continuous process of policy-making as emphasized in Dror's statement (1968 p.191) that "re-policymaking is needed during the execution of the policy." The content and objectives of the policy are sometimes preserved in the implementation process or they are lost in translation due to bureaucratic conventions or restraints that dilute the policymaker's intent (Bunker 1972). It is most advantageous if the individual responsible for administration or a representative is fully involved in the policymaking process, although unlikely in the formation of federal legislation.

The principle functions of policy execution are given to the implementer or most often a public administrator. Implementers are within bureaucracies or administrative organizations which are made up of non-elected employees who are organized under a hierarchy into departments and sections based on the title and description of their service (Sapru 2004). Implementers must first establish a perspective of the program and secondly execute and enforce the day-to-day activities to achieve the end result. Personal discretion is interjected into these activities giving the implementing parties a broad range of control over the efforts and outcomes.

Two distinct types of research have dominated the field of policy analysis, top-down and bottom-up. The top-down vs. bottom-up models have been heatedly debated since the beginnings of policy analysis. A review of the two disciplines reveals an argument for compromise that encourages the cooperation of technocratic or central support with democratic or bottom-up flexibility.

### **Top Down vs. Bottom Up**

In designing policy and program it is necessary to reconcile the need for the national government to extend their power into the local area with street-level bureaucrats and flexible implementation strategies responsive to local preference (Whitford 2007). Decentralizing regulatory enforcement awards an increased level of discretion to local implementers to evaluate

need and strategy on a case-level basis. However there are a number of tensions between national and local level governments that arise from a distinct disconnect between the ideal policy created at the top and the actual outcomes at the bottom. A review of top-down and bottom-up models have led some theorists to a hybrid model that shares the leverage in the implementation system (O'Toole 1983).

### **Top-Down Models**

Prior to the 1980s implementation variation was explained by single variable frameworks and conceptual models (Van Meter and Van Horn 1975). The top-down approach requires finding recognizable patterns in behavior that can be applied across different policy areas, therefore focusing on variables that can be manipulated by the central organization (Matland 1995). Common recommendations emerging in the literature aim to limit the; degree of policy interpretation by implementing officials (Van Meter and Van Horn 1975; Pressman Wildavsky 1973), number of decision or “veto” points involved in program delivery by providing sufficient incentives and placing urgency on implementation (Pressman and Wildavsky 1973), and amount of local implementer discretion by assigning administration responsibilities to those who have displayed past commitment to the policy objectives (Carroll et al. 2007).

There are three sets of criticism surrounding top-down approaches. The first and most obvious is what is referred to as “forward mapping” or starting with the statutory language (Matland 1995). Finding a solution to any problem requires a comprehensive understanding of the obstacles inhibiting the targeted behavior. Failing to consider the actions needed to be taken at the local level ensures implementation ambiguity. Second, top-downers neglect the influence of politics on implementation by limiting the focus to the administrative process. The implicit nature of approved statutes is in its vagueness and its ability to appease the multifaceted coalition in support (Pressman and Wildavsky 1973). The significance of political influence at the local

level follows the same argument and without recognizing this at the policy formulation stages may directly lead to policy failure (Matland 1995). The third criticism revolves around the emphasis placed on local implementers as impediments to successful policy interventions (Matland 1995). This criticism is what has led to the bottom-up model that views local implementers as experts in the needs at the local level and how to deliver services based on the environmental conditions.

### **Bottom-Up Models**

In contrast, “bottom-uppers” start with an analysis of the multitude of implementers and their reactions to policy at the local or operational level. Identifying the local, regional, and national actors involved in the execution of a policy provides a hierarchical network that can be evaluated at each decision-point (Hjern et al., 1978). At the micro-implementation level, actions are actually carried-out and have a direct effect on the targeted group, whereas at the macro-level the central organization can only indirectly affect the targeted group through a manipulation of the policy mandates (Matland 1995). Without a certain degree of flexibility to implement the policy at the local level, service delivery quality is diluted in the absence of implementer commitment and infidelity (Elmore 2007).

Two criticisms of the bottom-up models are presented in the top vs. bottom dichotomy. First, from a normative perspective policy control should be exercised by those who are held accountable by sovereign voters. The majorities of local service deliverers are not elected officials and are not subject to the political pressures that force attention and action (Matland 1995). Removing the interjection of street-level bureaucrats' discretion in service delivery is an impossible task even by the most committed. The second criticism highlights the effects of local level autonomy and the various outcomes observed as a result of multiple actors (Sabatier 1986).

Therefore, parameters should be centrally determined to ensure local level actions fall within a limited range of effectual strategies to successfully alter the targeted group or behavior.

### **Moving Past Top-Down vs. Bottom-Up: Organizational Theory**

Early policy analysis completely overlooked the multi-organizational effect by arguing for either top-down or bottom-up systems that neglect to see the relationship of interdependence and compromise in successful policy analysis. The legislative framework has the capacity to structure the implementation process through the mandates that translate into boundaries of implementation. Additionally, a careful selection of the administering institution is critical to the degree of commitment dedicated to program delivery (Sabatier et al. 1980). Democratic support and community participation stems from the implementers ability to engage the target group which ultimately decides the fate of the intervention. Intra and inter-organizational effects of policy mandates can be forecasted by analyzing how the required actions will coincide with the existing routines of the administering institution and the degree to which inter-organizational participation is necessary to permeate the target group.

### **Intra-Organizational Effects**

Analysis of the ideal policy or program is characterized by two features: 1) specificity and 2) amount of new resources accompanying the policy. The degree to which these features are present in the policy or program dictates the amount of constraint or discretion placed upon the implementing organization. Each type of mandate presents a set of intra-organizational implementation problems. Observing these issues as a trend is difficult due to the multitudes of idiosyncratic variables that alter the recognition of patterns.

Below are the four types of existing mandates delivered from the central organization:  
(Montjoy et al. 1979)

- Type A Mandate – policy is vague and accompanied by new resources the level of discretion granted to the administering institution is the highest. In the absence of specific mandates the administrators will interpret actions to be taken based on personal values and preferences.
- Type B Mandate – policy is specific and provided new resources for implementation. A higher level of constraint exists in the requirements set forth in the policy. The new resources provide an opportunity for organizational change under the direction of the policy.
- Type C Mandate – policy is vague and without resources providing more constraint than Type A mandates. In this scenario there is room for interpretation but the organization is restrained by its own routines.
- Type D Mandate – policy is specific and without resources delivering constraints under both the existing routines of the organization and the requirements of the policy statement.

Intra-organizational problems arise when an indirect relationship exists between the legislative mandated activities and the resources provided to carry out those activities.

Organizations are often tasked with the administration and execution of multiple programs. It is assumed that activities and routines are prioritized by the amount of resources provided for administration. In logic, the more complex the program the more resources should be provided, hence the more time spent implementing. Priorities of implementation significantly impact the devotion of the administering organization to the program (Bunker 1972).

Additional characteristics of the resources and mandates should support the local organization's transition into administration and execution. A certain amount of slack should be built into the provided resources, including time, to allow the policy mandates and the subsequent goals to be clearly communicated within the organization (Weimer 1983), so to form an action plan that is continually revisited and reformulated in response to environmental barriers. The mandates should be specific but not complex in their implementation. Those mandates that are complex by nature and may allow for an exercise of discretion at the local

level should be simplified by the central agency through directive materials and supportive relationships. Top-down support is critical to the implementation framework. The local institution must have clear knowledge about its expected performance (Bullock 1980).

### **Inter-Organization**

A scarce amount of literature recognizes that program implementation is a three-tiered process. The central agency and the local administrator are only two-thirds of the equation. Without public participation even the most competent and well-formulated interventions fail. For the sake of this research public participation refers to any organization or individual participation outside of the administering agency. The values of the implementing agency may conflict with more localized values important to the target group, e.g. diversity and access (Montjoy et al., 1979).

Achieving the delicate balance between the decision-making body, the stakeholders, and the target group is the main challenge facing program success. The target group is unaware and most times uninterested in the details of the policy and its implementation. Their judgments are guided by the potential benefits of the proposed intervention rather the conflict that exists between the controlling agencies. If an improvement cannot be observed or a promise cannot be delivered interest will be lost (Carroll et al. 2007). Stakeholders are valuable resources for eliciting concerns and bridging disconnects between the administering agency and the instant-gratification-driven citizen that is unaware of the time commitment needed to comply with statutory guidelines (Gershberg 1999).

Incentivizing and engaging public participation is the difficult step of the three-tiered system. Some policies mandate a certain level of citizen and stakeholder input be considered in forming implementation strategies while other overlook the contextual value in citizen's participation. Research by Folz and Hazlett (1991) found participation in a recycling program

was dependent on the policy chosen, how they were selected, and how they were implemented rather than on local community characteristics. Citizens have higher participation levels when they are a party to the program and implementation design.

A common thread can be observed between the three levels of implementation; inclusion. Social tensions disintegrate when each party to the policy is included in a degree of its formation. Whether it is the statutory language or the local implementation the three tiers are mutually dependent on each other for policy and program success.

### **Summary**

Researchers have moved past the top-down vs. bottom-up arguments recognizing the significant influence each school has on policy performance. Rather than seeing policy and implementation as mutually exclusive of each other it is advantageous to envision how the mandates formulated at the policy-making level will influence implementation at the street-level to enable flexibility where contextual differences apply. The following chapter will present the SRTS mandates from the federal policy, in addition to the state developed guidelines and how they are interpreted at the district level.

## CHAPTER 4 METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the methodology used to assess the relationship between SRTS program implementation and local-level bureaucratic perceptions. By examining the distribution of SRTS projects in conjunction with the attitudes of the program implementers and stakeholder organizations from around the State, one can begin to dissect the behaviors behind both those who have reacted favorably towards the program and those who have been less interested. The research methods, interview format and participants utilized in this project will be reviewed.

### **Study Design and Methodology**

A case study method was chosen for this research to examine how SRTS is being implemented in Florida across the seven FDOT districts. Working under the assumptions that inter and intra-organizational collaboration patterns ultimately affect program execution and outcomes the decentralized framework was studied in hopes of observing the degrees of multitudinal effects through implementer attitudes and project funding.

The research was conducted through two methods. The first involved a series of interviews with local level implementers to gage their perspectives and attitudes regarding the carrying out of the program and the ease of participation for interested applicants and organizations. The second part of the research analyzed SRTS project distribution and funding throughout the seven districts to identify any existing patterns in population demographics and school related data. To fully discern the effects of SRTS decentralized implementation on policy success it is imperative to understand and relate the distribution of projects with the views and flexibility of those administering them.

## **Interviews**

The local implementers interviewed in this research were partially chosen based on information revealed about applicants and participation levels in interviews with each of the District Coordinators. Those selected include: local governments and agencies, school districts, and supporting advocacy groups. Understanding why some applicants are eager to participate in the SRTS program and others are apprehensive will shed light on the program perceived value within the community and the barriers to participating.

Each interview took place over the phone where a consent statement was read and agreed to according to the International Review Board (IRB) protocol. The interviews were made up of non-scripted open ended interview questions in an effort to explore the chosen methods and attitudes of State, District, and local level implementers in-depth.

A research project currently being conducted by Noreen McDonald at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and Ruth Steiner at the University of Florida (2009) facilitated a fundamental understanding of the issues surrounding SRTS implementation through interviews of State Coordinators across the nation. The researcher conducted some of the interviews of the state coordinators and organized the interviews. Based upon those interviews, the questions posed to the district and local level implementers were developed to touch upon the emerging trends observed in the study of the 50 states.

The non-scripted interview questions were organized around the fundamental hierarchy of the Federal SRTS Program. The first line of questioning concentrated on the implementers reactions to the Federal guidelines mandated by SAFETEA-LU. This line of inquiry began with broad questions to allow the researcher to interpret any existing bias that may have developed prior to the administration of SRTS in previous program coordination. As the conversation progressed the researcher narrowed the questions to probe more specifically the federal mandates

perceived influence on local governments and agencies inclination to apply for grants, project timelines, equitable distribution of funding, and barriers to participation.

The second line of questioning focused on the State's role in administering the SRTS program. As before, the researcher first asked broad questions to understand the extent to which the State Coordinator converses with District Coordinators and other participating agencies and organizations. As the dialogue began to open up questions were posed to examine attitudes regarding the three uniform measures enforced across the State; (1) programming of projects into FDOT's five year work program (2) the infrastructure and non-infrastructure grant applications, and (3) the infrastructure scoring form used to score and rank infrastructure applications received.

In the last line of questioning the interview participant was asked a set of questions specific to the individual district's activities. District Coordinators were asked to explain each step of the grant process from soliciting the grant cycle through project execution. Eligible applicants were asked about their awareness of the program and their specific experience with application completion. For those who had been awarded project funding, project timetables were explored. Consultants and advocacy organizations were probed for the details of project collaboration with the Municipal/ State employees. It was possible at this point to begin identifying the common implementation strategies as well as divergent practices often reflecting the districts demographic profile and its urban or rural context.

Just before concluding the interview participants were given the opportunity to add any additional comments to the record or discuss any topics not covered by the interviewer. In final, the interviewer asked that any data the interview participant thought to be relevant to the research and that could be shared be sent by email or fax for possible inclusion in the study.

## **Project Distribution Analysis**

The project data and the demographics used to create the District profiles have been accumulated from multiple sources. The 2008 population estimates, 2007 median household income and population densities (people per square mile) were taken from the 2000 Census. The number of public elementary and middle schools in each County was calculated from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) 2009 Data Report. Private and charter schools were not included in this research. The infrastructure and non-infrastructure project information is in the process of being assembled by students at the University of Florida using the FDOT MadDog reports, a Federal Project Overview (FHWA 2009), and non-standardized District updates prepared by the Coordinators themselves. The researcher utilized the most recent copy of the spreadsheet recognizing that the data available is not completely accurate as of yet. Although projects have been programmed through 2014 this research will only take into account those with committed funding under the current Federal authorization through FY2009.

Examining the districts apportioned and committed funds illustrates program implementation progress across the state. The funding amounts are then paired with county population and school demographics for analysis of existing funding and participation patterns. If identified, the demographics behind those patterns may provide an insight to community acceptance and engagement as well as the role of local implementer discretion if any.

The following chapter describes how the legislative mandates influence Florida's statewide program development and guidelines, and how both the federal and state requirements impact the program activities at the local level. Further, the findings of the coordinator and local implementer interviews are presented to show the varying strategies used to engage the community in the program and evade the obstacles created by the mandates.

## CHAPTER 5 THE EFFECTS OF FEDERAL AND STATE MANDATES

This chapter examines the effects of the SRTS policy mandates in a hierarchal framework tracing the influence of the laws set forth in the Federal SRTS Legislation on the development of Florida's statewide program and continuing on to the State guidelines enforced upon the seven Districts. Responses from the implementer interviews are used to highlight specific instances of difficulty, as well as, strengths in implementation due to the State and Federal mandates. Understanding the administrative direction and the integral obstructions within the provisions of the policy and program is imperative to accurately forecast the outcomes of implementation. A view from the top-down illustrates the key decisions made by the central institution, usually the government, and their intentions for the execution of the policy intervention.

### **Federal Legislation**

The states program development are required to follow the provisions laid outlined in the SRTS Legislation. Mandates include straightforward requirements such as program administration by the state DOT, infrastructure and non-infrastructure funding levels, and the state coordinator requirement, both covered earlier. Other stipulations provided for in the legislation are less direct and are more influential in the efficiency of implementation and program execution. These mandates include: the eligible recipients, the fund reimbursement contract, and compliance with Title 23 regulations.

### **Eligible Recipients**

The SRTS Legislation indentifies eligible funding recipients as state, local, and regional agencies, including nonprofit organizations that demonstrate the ability to meet the program requirements (§1404(e)). Nontraditional partners of State DOTs are encouraged such as grassroots driven school and community groups.

## **Fund Reimbursement**

The SRTS Program is a reimbursement program for cost incurred rather than a program in which the funding is provided up-front for projects awarded. Because of this process, a project cannot begin until the state DOT has committed the necessary funding and authorizes the recipient to proceed. Funding can only be provided up-front in special circumstances under a “working capital advance” process. Any funds expended before authorization to proceed is given by the FHWA may not be reimbursed.

The reimbursement conditions placed upon awarded applicants inherently creates financial feasibility barriers for small and low-income communities. Requiring local governments and applying organizations to absorb the upfront costs of the project assumes the SRTS program is a priority within the community and funds in the amount of the total project estimate can be committed until reimbursement is received. The timeline for reimbursement varies in a decentralized system and is dependent upon the district coordinators response time.

Non-infrastructure projects specifically receive more non-traditional applicants who must provide the funding out of already restrained budgets. Small non-profits and schools work on very stringent budgets that are prepared a year or more in advance. Absorbing the project cost can create cash flow issues within the organization, thus, deterring participation. Although the Federal Legislation encourages schools, school districts, and non-profits to apply for SRTS funding these regulations effectively limit participants to local governments.

This is a familiar story to District 1, a predominantly rural and low-income region. Recognizing that the lack of available monetary and staff resources was preventing eligible applicants from applying for non-infrastructure funding, the coordinator has taken it upon her to recreate the program so it could meet the needs of her region. Instead of waiting for interested applicants to find the resources necessary to fulfill each step, infrastructure projects are designed

in-house by district engineers and are directly bid out and funded by the district. Removing the cost feasibility barriers not only encourages low-income communities to apply for projects but it also bypasses the time delay inherent in the contract and bidding processes.

### **Title 23 Regulations**

The SRTS National Partnership Work Group on Implementation released a memorandum in April of 2009 reviewing the implementation challenges being met across the Nation. Ranking the highest on the list of concerns is the ability for awarded infrastructure and non-infrastructure projects to comply with the complex and costly Title 23 regulations. Title 23 regulations govern Federal-Aid Highways and are extremely complex and time-consuming to comply with. Once SRTS projects are awarded the applicants must enter into a contract with the State DOT. This process often takes months and up to a year in some cases.

Complying with Title 23 regulations: (SRTS National Partnership 2009)

- Requires project agreements between the recipient and the state DOT.
- Requires that all work on the project must be done following the Davis-Bacon rules about prevailing minimum wages. Municipal/state employees can only be used in circumstances where they can document that it is not cost-effective to go through a competitive procurement process (called “force account construction”).
- Submission of plans, specs and estimates to the state DOT. Plans must follow existing design standards.
- Environmental impact studies completed (often called NEPA), which can entail an environmental review, a larger environmental impact study, or a categorical exclusion from the environmental review process.
- The project must be programmed in the statewide and metropolitan transportation plans (STIP and TIP).
- If the project is in an air quality attainment or maintenance area, it must meet transportation conformity regulations.
- Requires the state DOT to submit forms to the FHWA division administrator (this is a federal employee of FHWA that is assigned to the state DOT) attesting that all requirements

are complete. The FHWA division administrator will then give the authorization to proceed, which the state DOT will then provide to the local project.

- Entails the use of free and open competitive bidding, including equal opportunity for disadvantaged business enterprises (DBEs) during bidding and contracting to comply with the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Lays out a specific process for how bids are received and tabulated, and how the final decision is to be made.

In requiring compliance with Title 23 regulations the design and construction of SRTS awarded infrastructure projects are forced to follow the same guidelines as all federal transportation projects, most of which are large and complex highway projects. These guidelines require a disproportionate amount of time and effort for projects with a national average cost of \$154,000 (SRTS National Partnership 2009). In a national survey, 80 % of survey respondents said that the implementation process was either somewhat or extremely time-consuming, while only 4 % said the process is somewhat fast or easy. A recipient in Maryland estimated complying with Title 23 regulations cost an estimated \$30,000 (SRTS National Partnership Implementation Working Group 2009).

Florida's implementers revealed an equal amount of frustration with the Title 23 regulations. Florida has attempted to placate the issues by requiring yet another inter-organization link known as the LAP agreement. Opinions and perspectives on this will be discussed in the next section.

### **State Guidelines**

The decentralized framework of Florida's program leaves very few state guidelines to be interpreted at the district level. There are three to be exact, LAP partnership requirements, the FDOT Five Year Work Program applying mainly to infrastructure projects, and the standardized infrastructure and non-infrastructure applications. The coordinators interviewed responded with mixed opinions in response to the state guidelines and how they impact program implementation.

Some are helpful in guiding the applicant and the implementer but most have been recorded as time-consuming and repetitive. The infrastructure coordinators were probed more intensely on these subjects being that infrastructure projects follow a stricter set of guidelines.

### **LAP Requirements**

To address the Title 23 requirements provided for by the Federal Legislation Florida stipulates all eligible non-traditional recipients, (school boards, private schools and Community Traffic Safety Teams (CTST)), applying for infrastructure funds be willing to partner with a maintaining agency that is Local Area Program (LAP) certified (FDOT SRTS Guidelines 2008). LAP was established in 1991 concurrent with the passage of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) to contract with local agencies to plan, develop, design, acquire right of way, and construct transportation facilities (FDOT 2008).

FDOT and the State Coordinator chose to require agreements with LAP certified agencies because their familiarity with the complexities of Title 23 regulations ensures compliance and guarantees proper use of funds. The penalty for misuse of funds or the failure to adhere to Title 23 is a substantial delay in project execution due to an extensive federal review process or rescission of the award in the worst case scenario.

Although LAP agency partnerships employ staff familiar with Title 23 on every project, it adds another level of organizational interdependence and the process of LAP certification is cumbersome in itself. There are a total of 192 LAP certified agencies out of 410 municipalities in Florida. It can be seen in Figure 5-1 that the denser populated and more metropolitan regions have a higher concentration of LAP certified agencies such as the Tampa – St. Petersburg region, southeast Florida, and the Orlando metropolitan region. Metropolitan planning organizations, regional planning councils, and water management districts are not represented by Figure 5-1, but are included in the total number of certified entities. LAP certified agencies are scarce in

North Central Florida and the Florida Panhandle with a concentration of counties and entities that are not certified. This presumably transfers the responsibility to the District Coordinator and limits the ability of non-traditional partners to participate unless they become LAP certified; a process that is lengthy and expensive to complete. An agency awarded SRTS infrastructure funding in Martin County, in the absence of a relationship with the County, discontinued the contract once they realized the time commitment involved in becoming LAP certified.

Each District has the option of developing alternate ways of completing SRTS projects including building the project itself, or buying equipment and installing and maintaining it itself (FDOT SRTS Guidelines 2008). Several of the districts have either chosen to bypass the LAP process or implemented a hybrid model that is more cost-effective. Examples include:

- District 4 has chosen to require that LAP agencies complete the design of low-cost straightforward sidewalk projects in order to fund more projects across the region.
- District 3 has achieved shorter project timelines by bidding design and build contracts for the larger and more complex projects from the district office; therefore, choosing not to use the LAP process.
- District 1 has completely bypassed the LAP process to prevent applicants from being deterred by the fund reimbursement process so projects are designed in house and contracted to build by the district office.

Without dissecting the long-standing debate of public vs. private competency, these opposing views represent one of the many outcomes in a decentralized system. One may see this as a product of democratic innovation where local flexibility allows new and inexperienced actors to participate in the process without becoming intimidated. At the other end of the scope, one may also see the unilateral decision-making process by the local implementer as being subject to political and relational influence. The argument that this may be a result of organizational bias in prioritizing projects should be further researched.

## **Five Year Work Program**

Florida DOT programs its projects into what is called the 5-Year Work Program (5YWP) pursuant to Section 339.135, Florida Statutes (F.S.). The 5YWP provides for the detailed development schedule of each transportation project from planning to completion. Funding for projects in the Work Program are appropriated through five different stages of project planning and development: 1) planning; 2) environmental assessment and engineering; 3) design; 4) acquisition of right-of-way (ROW); and 5) construction and construction engineering inspection. As a result, Florida's first SRTS call for applications in 2007 programmed projects through 2012 (The Bike/Ped Professional 2009(3)). In fact, SRTS funds are currently programmed through FY2014 meaning fifteen years of projects have been reviewed and ranked in the last three years. As part of the process each awarded SRTS project must be programmed into the local Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) that is later adopted into the State's "Adopted Work Plan" approved by the Secretary of Transportation on July 1 of each year.

The FDOT Five Year Work Program has an equal amount of advantages as it does disadvantages and it would seem that the seven districts are split on their perceptions of its impact on the program. Pertaining to the earlier discussion on LAP requirements, some of the coordinators believe the Five Year Work Program gives sufficient time for awarded applicants to comply with LAP standards. SRTS projects are usually considered categorical exemptions under NEPA and are waived from completing an environmental assessment. Generally, bicycle and pedestrian project qualify by federal regulation [23 CFR 771.177(c)] for a categorical exclusion. Performing an environmental assessment is an extremely lengthy and costly task so acquiring a categorical exclusion drastically shortens the project timeline and conserves funding. In addition, districts refuse to approve a project where ROW acquisition is necessary due to the exorbitant increase in project cost. Circumventing these phases in the Work Program shortens the project

timeline although waiting up to three years to break ground on a sidewalk can be extremely frustrating for non-traditional applicants who desire instant results.

Other coordinators agree that this process evokes frustration among engaged community members and claim the process is contradictory to the SRTS principals of efficiency. It is difficult to create momentum for a school-based project, especially infrastructure, when the project is already competing for time resources within the responsible organization. In addition, public participation is motivated by instant gratification and in the absence of visual progress the so-called “champions” of the program lose sight of its full potential. When District 7 had difficulty creating momentum, the district coordinator purchased signage and overhead flashing lights with available funds to be installed throughout Pinellas County so that eligible recipients could witness an immediate benefit produced by the grant and become engaged in its implementation.

The LAP agreement and 5YWP effectively impacts both the applicant and the district coordinator. One would assume the application would only directly impact the applicant but the interviews recorded an unexpected response.

### **Applicants & Applications**

Before applying for project funding Florida requires applicants have prepared a SRTS plan, held a SRTS committee meeting, and completed the student travel data surveys provided by the SRTS National Center. The SRTS plan should entail how the proposed improvement(s) address the 5 E’s; a timeline of each strategy; a map of the area covered; and an explanation of project evaluation. Requiring a SRTS plan engages the applicant at an early stage and builds momentum and support for long-term initiatives ([www.saferoutesinfo.org](http://www.saferoutesinfo.org)). After completing a SRTS the applicant must form a SRTS Committee which has met at least once before their application is submitted. The names of attendees and notes on the meeting are reported in the

application. The Florida Safe Ways to School Tool Kit, created by the Florida Traffic and Bicycle Safety Education Program, provides guidance on creating a successful local program. The Student In-Class Travel Tally is performed by each teacher everyday for a week. The purpose is to collect valuable data on how students get to and from school to form a baseline scenario and track behavior changes once the project is completed ([www.saferoutesinfo.org](http://www.saferoutesinfo.org)).

Two separate applications have been developed for project funding; one for infrastructure and one for non-infrastructure. Both forms ask the applicant to identify the problem, current conditions of bicycle and pedestrian activity, how the project will comprehensively address the 5 E's, and a budget narrative, although much more detailed in the infrastructure application. Non-infrastructure applications proposing to benefit multiple school in a city, county, must be submitted in the form of a "Scope of Services" identifying the broader issues and the plan to combat those issues (FDOT 2008 p.10). It can be said from observation that although both the applications are categorized similarly the infrastructure application is much more detail oriented. Questions regarding roadway design and drainage, to name a few, require a person of formal engineering and land surveying training to participate in the application process.

In recent years, the number of proposals submitted by applicants has been limited to five in an effort to utilize resources efficiently. Limiting proposals requires applicants to prioritize their needs and complete the applications in more detail and by a higher quality standard. The limited funds available are stretched thin and projects must display a comprehensive nature and be cost-effective in order to be competitive.

Eligible applicants differ between infrastructure and non-infrastructure projects as do the application cycles. Non-infrastructure projects adhere to the federal mandate on eligible applicants and have no formal application cycle. Eligible applicants are welcome to apply until

all the funding is obligated. Only a school board, private school, or a CTST are permitted to apply for infrastructure projects. Funding cycles are opened once a year. The call for applications opens from fall through the spring of the following year to give applicants enough time to coordinate all application prerequisites. Most applicants will need to partner with a government agency that can enter into a legal contract with the FDOT, otherwise known as the maintaining agency. Maintaining agencies are also responsible for providing the funding advance and managing the infrastructure post project completion.

When asked about the standard applications used by the State, the non-infrastructure coordinators seemed unaffected since the information requested in non-technical and mostly just requires a time commitment. The majority of the infrastructure coordinators, on the other hand, expressed a certain discontent at the level of detail involved on the infrastructure application; characterizing them as “cumbersome”. The infrastructure applications request such technical information as: curb gradient, ROW and drainage to name a few. This is another prime example of why LAP agreements are critical in the case of non-traditional applicants; however, the relationship with the LAP agency may not be created until after the award has been announced, and so the district coordinators become the main contact in assisting with the completion of the application. This time commitment has become aggravating since all but one of the infrastructure coordinators claimed to be completing a site analysis for each application received. Further, reliance on the LAP agency creates another point of organizational interdependence which may complicate the process due to scheduling and time conflicts as mentioned earlier (O’Toole et al. 1984). More than half of the coordinators suggested shortening the application to include fewer questions. Having a clear picture of the applicant’s goal-oriented solution to the identified problem, in addition to creating long-term sustainable plans are a few examples of

questions that could be expanded upon to ensure the applicant's commitment to the time and effort it may take for a successful intervention. It is believed that the quality of information would improve and the call for applications could be shortened to further streamline the project timeline.

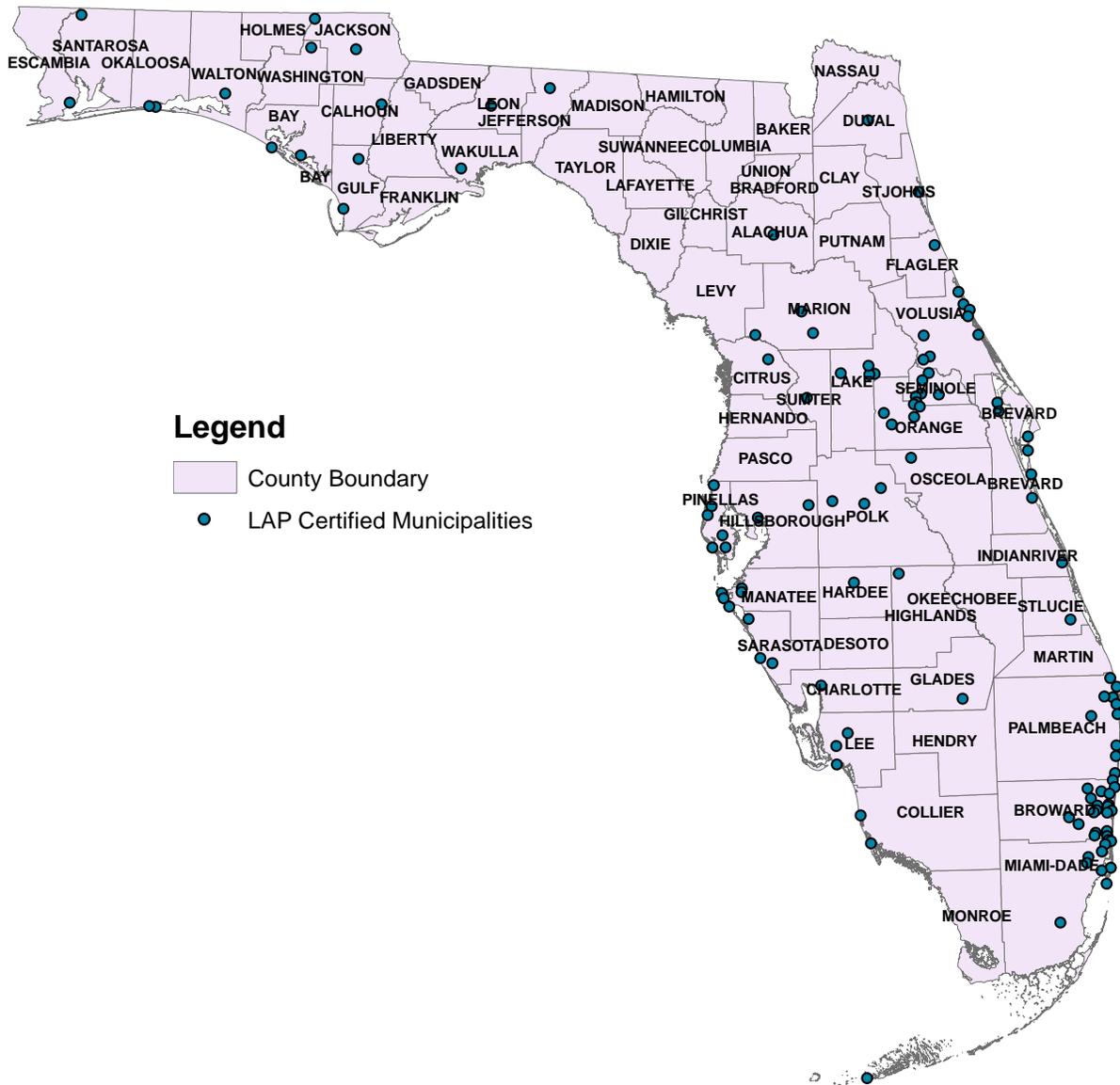


Figure 5-1. Florida Certified LAP Agencies. (FDOT Production Support Office (2009). LAP Certified Agencies.)

## CHAPTER 6 DISTRICT LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION & SRTS PROJECT DISTRIBUTION

This chapter will first review the apportionment and obligations of funds committed across the seven FDOT districts to further support and explain the facilitation and hindrances recorded in the implementer interviews discussed in the previous chapter. Second, the allocation of committed SRTS funds will be analyzed in an effort to recognize any existing trends in the demographics and SRTS related data. Last, the researcher will examine the geographic distribution of SRTS projects to address the topic of funding equity.

### **Apportionment and Commitment**

Florida has been apportioned a total of \$29.1 million. Section 1404(c)(3) of the Federal Legislation designates set-asides for administrative expenses making no more than \$3 million available for the administrative expenses in carrying out the program. These funds are used for the State Coordinators salary, travel expenses, and the purchasing of print materials used to train and educate local and statewide organizations. After these funds have been separated a total of \$26,011,000 is left to be apportioned among the seven districts based on the percentage of K-8<sup>th</sup> student population within the state. Table 6-1 shows the apportioned and committed funds by district showing the total amount of funding committed since the programs enactment in 2005 to be upwards of \$11.7 million accounting for 45% of the funds. The first call for applications took place in 2007 as a result of new program start up delays and is programmed through 2012 in accordance with the 5YWP. The apportioned amounts are normalized for each district based on the number of students to illustrate the equal distribution. The average per capita expenditure is \$9.92 with district 2 on the higher end at \$10.91 and district 5 at the low end with \$9.61 per student.

It can be observed in Table 6-1 that districts 4 and 5 account for 40% of the student population in Florida therefore receiving the most SRTS funding to be allocated. District 3, the most rural in the state, is apportioned 7% of the statewide funds to be allocated over sixteen counties and 216 schools (Table 6-8). Districts 1 and 6 have comparable general and student populations and so have approximately the same amount of funding to be awarded, however, district 1 oversees twelve counties and district 6 oversees two counties of which the volume of the population resides in Miami-Dade.

Progress of program implementation can be analyzed by the amount of funds committed to projects within each district. Funds are committed based on the phasing of the 5YWP. As a result, funds may have been committed to the design or engineering of a project but have not yet been committed to the construction leaving a substantial amount of funding unobligated. Based on this detail, the varied degrees of committed funding can be better interpreted. Table 6-1 shows less than half the districts having committed more than 50% of their funding as of July 2009. District 7 has committed 99% of their total apportioned funds; an investment equal to \$9.85 per student. District 6 ranks second for committed funding with 79% obligated to projects, a per capita rate of \$7.61. Districts 1, 4, and 5 have the least amount of total obligated funds amounting to approximately 20% give or take a point.

Tables 6-2 through 6-4 dissect the commitment of funds by the three authorized funding types for a more detailed examination of program implementation. A general overview illustrates a higher proportion of non-infrastructure funds committed across the districts with an average of 71%. The infrastructure and flexible funding categories are more varied with 44% of infrastructure and 28% of flexible apportionments committed. An individual analysis by district reveals District 7 has committed approximately 100% of both the infrastructure and non-

infrastructure funds while District 2 has committed over 100% of the flexible funds to regional projects. Interestingly, District 3 shows 100% of non-infrastructure funds committed but only 25% of infrastructure and 31% of the flexible funds. A similar trend is observed in District 1.

### **Allocation, Demographics and Equity**

A review of the projects by District was conducted to identify existing relationships between project funding and county demographics. Tables 6-6 through 6-12 present the number of projects awarded, the amount of infrastructure and non-infrastructure funding committed, and a description of the project when provided. Tracking the funds at the county level provides a comprehensive perspective of the investments being made and the potential number of people being affected by them and vice versa.

#### **Infrastructure Investments**

A ranking of infrastructure investments by county reveals anything but a recognizable pattern in project funding. Miami-Dade holds the most student population and ranks the highest in infrastructure investments with an average student per capita of \$6.02 (see table 6-5), lower than the state average of \$7.70. Pinellas, ranking second highest in infrastructure investments, comes closest to the state average with \$7.41 invested across a student population of almost 110,000.

Examining the ranks by student population exposes two polar ends of infrastructure investments across the state. Dixie County ranks eighth in infrastructure investments but has a student population upwards of 2,000 making its per capita investment almost \$165. On the other end, Hillsborough County has the second largest student population in the State yet ranks fourteenth in infrastructure investments amounting to only \$1.19 per capita; a primary example of the outcomes of a decentralized system. The indirect relationship between school population and per capita investment highlights a major complaint of transportation infrastructure

investments. The award of one project drastically depletes the remaining to be allocated and so equality by its standard definition is difficult to achieve. The small student population has no effect on the cost of sidewalk construction, therefore showing what seems to be a disproportionate and unequal award but in reality has no correlation. Per capita funding may not be an accurate representation of investment equality considering the significant cost of a single project; however it is used to normalize the data for sake of perspective.

When examining the distribution of projects by district it could be observed that the county which the central district office is located have all been awarded funding except for Broward County in district 4. Miami-Dade ranks first, Orange ranks fourth, Columbia ranks fifth, and Okaloosa ranks seventh in infrastructure funding committed. This may be due to a stronger network and relationships within the County in addition to greater program awareness.

The prevalence of rural county projects is equal to urban county projects. This occurrence may be unique to Florida since the district apportioned funding must be awarded within the assigned counties. If under a centralized program Districts 1, 2, and 3 may be neglected and left unaware of the project. District 4, with Broward County making up almost 10 % of the state's population has awarded the most infrastructure funding to Indian River County with the lowest population in the district. In contradiction, districts 5 (table 6-10) and 7 (table 6-12) show awarded infrastructure projects in counties with higher populations and densities.

### **Non-Infrastructure Investments**

Tracking non-infrastructure funding at the county level is difficult because all of the districts, except district 6, have implemented district wide non-infrastructure programs. Figure 6-1 displays the distribution of infrastructure and non-infrastructure projects across the State showing all counties having a non-infrastructure component implemented except for Monroe County who has yet to be the recipient of any SRTS award.

District wide programs were chosen to be implemented in the majority of districts after unsuccessful solicitation by coordinators and to ensure the required 10 % of funding be obligated for educational campaigns. District wide programs most often pair with the Community Traffic Safety Team (CTST) to manage pedestrian and bicycle safety outreach and education to schools throughout the district. CTST's are local groups comprised of multi-disciplined professionals who advocate highway safety.

District 1 purchased multiple bicycle trailers, bicycles, and helmets and distributed them to interested organizations and the local CTST's under one stipulation. Those receiving the bike rodeo equipment were required to undergo the Florida Traffic and Bicycle Educational Program (FTBSEP). FTBSEP is a train-the-trainer program that employs diverse skills to safely and responsibly encourage walking and bicycling as alternative transportation modes (FTBSEP 2009). The program targets school teachers and community trainer to serve as instructors for grades K-8<sup>th</sup>. By requiring the administrators of the bike rodeos to be certified trainers, the program indefinitely extends its life expectancy through transfer of knowledge to another level of implementers; the teachers, principles, and parent volunteers. Figure 5-2 shows the counties in which FTBSEP has certified professionals to conduct trainings in recent years. A preliminary comparison of counties with implemented SRTS and FTBSEP show the majority overlap but SRTS programs is more prevalent in the rural counties in districts 2 and 3 probably as a result of the district wide programs.

District 2's has also implemented a program administered through the CTST network including over 900 volunteers from city, county, state and federal agencies. The education campaign has notably reached 28,500 children since its creation in September of 2007. Activities

include the distribution of bicycle helmets by multiple organizations and volunteers and the distribution of education materials.

On top of the district wide programs, two districts have awarded service-based contracts to advocacy organizations with objectives parallel to those laid out in the SRTS Legislation. Hillsborough, Pinellas, and Pasco Counties of District 7 have contracted with Safe Kids USA and Miami-Dade of District 6 has a non-infrastructure agreement with the University of Miami, Miller School of Medicine's Walk Safe Program.

Safe Kids USA is a national network dedicated to preventing accidental childhood injury. There are over 300 local and state coalitions in the US alone. The coalition consists of advocates from every sector of the community including: law enforcement, fire/rescue, private industry, and public health to name a few. Hillsborough's program is led by St. Joseph's Children's Hospital of Tampa (Safe Kids Tampa 2009). Pinellas and Pasco programs are sponsored by All Children's Hospital of the Florida Suncoast ([www.allkids.org](http://www.allkids.org) 2009). The activities specific to the SRTS program include: bicycle rodeos, dissemination of educational materials, and Annual Walk to School Day Activities. Safe Kids had a mediocre response when it was only a community based program. Since partnering with SRTS the program has infiltrated the school systems and has been extremely satisfied with the results.

University of Miami's Walk Safe Program was developed in 2001 and linked pediatric pedestrian safety to children's walking to and from school in 2007. Research conducted in 2004 showed Miami-Dade as having one of the highest rates of child pedestrian accidents (Hameed et al. 2004). The program is committed to decreasing the number of children injuries and fatalities as a result of children being hit by cars. The element of the program specifically utilized by SRTS non-infrastructure funding consists of three day education curriculum taught in the

classroom to children in grades K-5. The information is taught yearly in the beginning of October using audio, visual, and motor skills. Walk Safe has implemented their education program in over 255 schools in the Miami-Dade County ([www.walksafe.us](http://www.walksafe.us)).

### **Summary**

The findings presented in this chapter show no obvious trends between infrastructure project funding and county demographics leading one to believe the immaturity of the program is resulting in few applications and few award decisions to be made by the intended competitive process. Obligated funding is aligned with the 5YWP at this time; however, variations in funding patterns between districts are difficult to correlate to the implementer's perspectives reviewed in the previous chapter. The results of non-infrastructure funding patterns all point towards the beneficial effects of non-profit partnerships and extended inter-organizational networks. The following chapter will discuss the implications of these findings and make recommendations to be considered during program re-formulation.



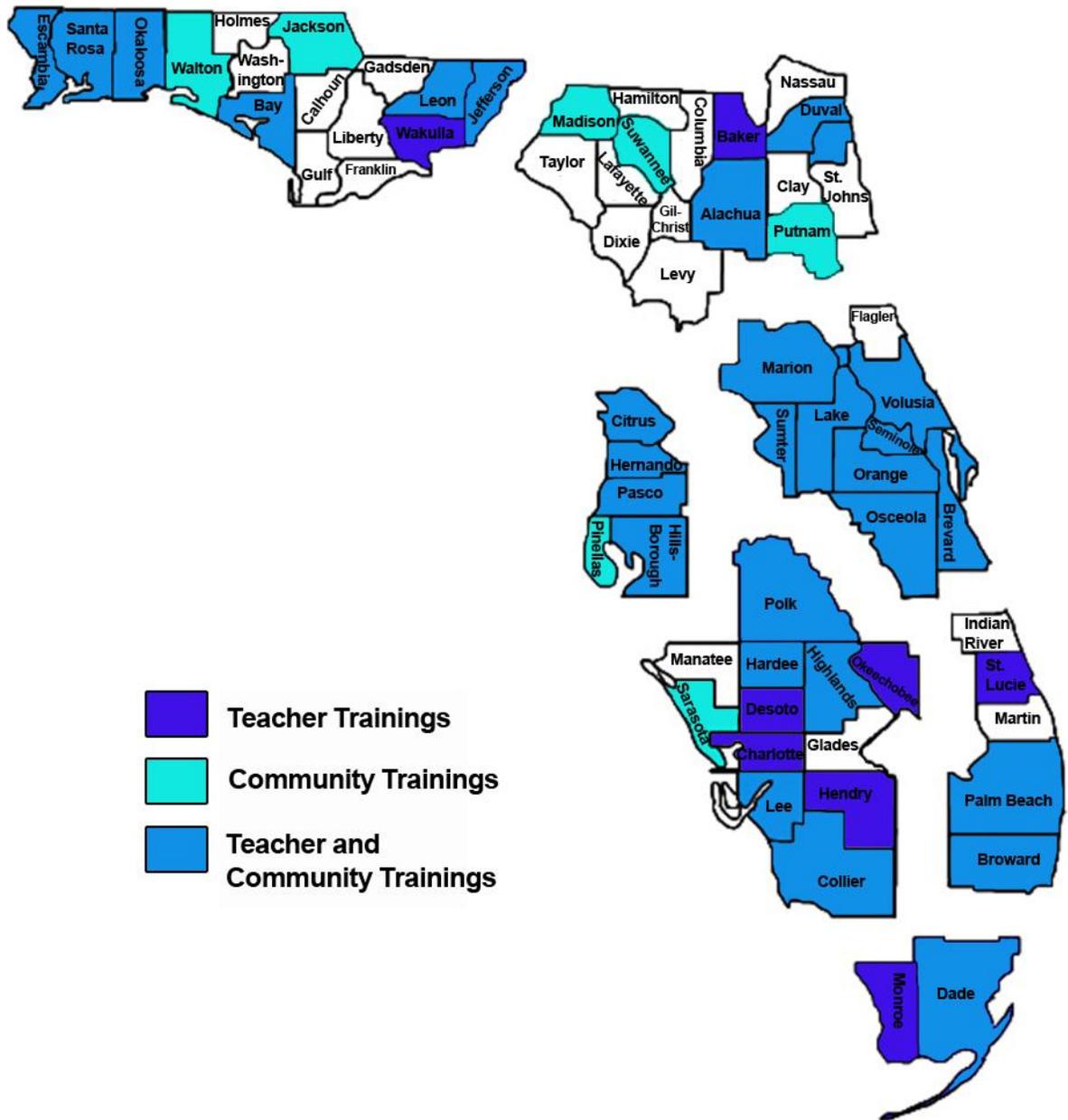


Figure 6-2. Florida Traffic and Bicycle Safety Education Program Trainings by County and District (Source: FTBS, 2009)

Table 6-1. FDOT District Apportioned and Committed SRTS Funds

|            | 2008<br>Estimated<br>Population | 2006-2007<br>Student<br>Population | Number of<br>Elementary &<br>Middle Schools | Average<br>Persons per<br>Square Mile | Total Funds<br>Apportioned | Total Funds<br>Committed | Percent<br>Committed | Funds<br>Apportioned<br>per Student | Funds<br>Committed<br>per Student |
|------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| District 1 | 2,569,584                       | 355,818                            | 338                                         | 194                                   | 3,438,000                  | 716,357                  | 21                   | 9.66                                | 2.01                              |
| District 2 | 1,915,508                       | 266,945                            | 310                                         | 131                                   | 2,913,000                  | 1,636,992                | 56                   | 10.91                               | 6.13                              |
| District 3 | 1,349,082                       | 198,909                            | 216                                         | 105                                   | 1,955,000                  | 657,927                  | 34                   | 9.82                                | 3.31                              |
| District 4 | 3,552,610                       | 508,791                            | 328                                         | 542                                   | 5,005,000                  | 1,071,839                | 21                   | 9.84                                | 2.11                              |
| District 5 | 3,584,727                       | 535,760                            | 477                                         | 418                                   | 5,149,000                  | 946,953                  | 18                   | 9.61                                | 1.78                              |
| District 6 | 2,470,488                       | 362,158                            | 303                                         | 619                                   | 3,496,000                  | 2,756,060                | 79                   | 9.65                                | 7.61                              |
| District 7 | 2,875,177                       | 406,472                            | 398                                         | 1,036                                 | 4,055,000                  | 4,004,935                | 99                   | 9.97                                | 9.85                              |
| Total      | 18,317,176                      | 2,634,853                          | 2,370                                       | 435                                   | 26,011,000                 | 11,791,063               | 45                   | 9.92                                | 4.69                              |

Table 6-2. SRTS Apportioned and Committed Non-Infrastructure Portion (10%)

|            | 2006-2007 Student<br>Population | SR2N Funds<br>Apportioned | SR2N Funds<br>Committed | Percent<br>Committed |
|------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|
| District 1 | 355,818                         | 353,000                   | 342,200                 | 97                   |
| District 2 | 266,945                         | 299,000                   | 265,253                 | 89                   |
| District 3 | 198,909                         | 201,000                   | 201,906                 | 100.5                |
| District 4 | 508,791                         | 518,000                   | 124,910                 | 24                   |
| District 5 | 535,760                         | 529,000                   | 281,282                 | 53                   |
| District 6 | 362,158                         | 364,000                   | 268,947                 | 74                   |
| District 7 | 406,472                         | 416,000                   | 426,966                 | 102                  |
| Total      | 2,634,853                       | 2,680,000                 | 1,911,464               | 71                   |

Table 6-3. SRTS Apportioned and Committed Infrastructure Portion (70%)

|            | 2006-2007 Student<br>Population | SR2S Funds<br>Apportioned | SR2S Funds<br>Committed | Percent<br>Committed |
|------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|
| District 1 | 355,818                         | 2,675,000                 | 289,622                 | 11                   |
| District 2 | 266,945                         | 2,270,000                 | 1,013,531               | 45                   |
| District 3 | 198,909                         | 1,525,000                 | 384,382                 | 25                   |
| District 4 | 508,791                         | 3,905,000                 | 838,541                 | 21                   |
| District 5 | 535,760                         | 4,012,000                 | 665,671                 | 17                   |
| District 6 | 362,158                         | 2,729,000                 | 2,229,388               | 82                   |
| District 7 | 406,472                         | 3,160,000                 | 3,351,766               | 106                  |
| Total      | 2,634,853                       | 20,276,000                | 8,772,901               | 44                   |

Table 6-4. SRTS Apportioned and Committed Flexible Spending Portion (20%)

|            | 2006-2007 Student<br>Population | SR2E Funds<br>Apportioned | SR2E Funds<br>Committed | Percent<br>Committed |
|------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|
| District 1 | 355,818                         | 410,000                   | 84,535                  | 21                   |
| District 2 | 266,945                         | 344,000                   | 358,208                 | 104                  |
| District 3 | 198,909                         | 229,000                   | 71,639                  | 31                   |
| District 4 | 508,791                         | 582,000                   | 108,388                 | 18                   |
| District 5 | 535,760                         | 608,000                   | 0                       | 0                    |
| District 6 | 362,158                         | 403,000                   | 846                     | 1                    |
| District 7 | 406,472                         | 479,000                   | 240,237                 | 50                   |
| Total      | 2,634,853                       | 3,055,000                 | 863,853                 | 28                   |

Table 6-5. Florida SRTS Infrastructure Funding by County

| Rank | FDOT District | County       | Committed Infrastructure Funding 2005-2009 | Estimated Population 2008 | Funding per student capita | Percent of Students Transported 2006-2007 |
|------|---------------|--------------|--------------------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| 1    | 6             | Miami-Dade   | 2,130,498                                  | 353,783                   | 6.02                       | 16                                        |
| 2    | 7             | Pinellas     | 814,481                                    | 109,880                   | 7.41                       | 40                                        |
| 3    | 4             | Indian River | 530,000                                    | 17,611                    | 30.09                      | 47                                        |
| 4    | 5             | Orange       | 470,722                                    | 175,155                   | 2.69                       | 39                                        |
| 5    | 2             | Columbia     | 466,928                                    | 10,179                    | 45.87                      | 48                                        |
| 6    | 4             | Palm Beach   | 416,929                                    | 171,429                   | 2.43                       | 35                                        |
| 7    | 3             | Okaloosa     | 381,396                                    | 30,254                    | 12.61                      | 44                                        |
| 8    | 2             | Dixie        | 368,759                                    | 2,241                     | 164.55                     | 57                                        |
| 9    | 7             | Pasco        | 298,000                                    | 64,588                    | 4.61                       | 51                                        |
| 10   | 3             | Calhoun      | 285,308                                    | 2,227                     | 128.11                     | 50                                        |
| 11   | 2             | Taylor       | 281,791                                    | 3,420                     | 82.4                       | 47                                        |
| 12   | 3             | Bay          | 266,656                                    | 27,005                    | 9.87                       | 44                                        |
| 13   | 2             | Suwannee     | 243,480                                    | 5,981                     | 40.71                      | 56                                        |
| 14   | 7             | Hillsborough | 216,387                                    | 193,480                   | 1.19                       | 39                                        |
| 15   | 1             | Collier      | 142,240                                    | 43,164                    | 3.30                       | 41                                        |
| 16   | 5             | Volusia      | 77,555                                     | 65,867                    | 1.18                       | 39                                        |
| 17   | 1             | Highlands    | 74,154                                     | 12,453                    | 5.95                       | 45                                        |
| 18   | 3             | Jackson      | 46,812                                     | 7,382                     | 6.34                       | 54                                        |
| 19   | 5             | Marion       | 46,016                                     | 42,570                    | 1.08                       | 56                                        |
| 20   | 1             | Polk         | 41,507                                     | 92,873                    | 0.45                       | 51                                        |
| 21   | 5             | Brevard      | 36,293                                     | 74,791                    | 0.35                       | 40                                        |
| 22   | 1             | Sarasota     | 35,605                                     | 42,190                    | 0.84                       | 50                                        |
| 23   | 5             | Seminole     | 35,085                                     | 66,349                    | 0.53                       | 41                                        |
| 24   | 3             | Liberty      | 29,127                                     | 1,475                     | 19.74                      | 49                                        |
| 25   | 2             | Clay         | 16,395                                     | 14,883                    | 1.10                       | 42                                        |

Table 6-6. District 1 Population and SRTS Project Data

|                                 | Estimated<br>Population<br>2008 | Percent of<br>Florida<br>Population | Persons<br>per<br>Square<br>Mile<br>2000 | Number of<br>Elementary<br>and Middle<br>Schools | Number<br>of Pre-K-<br>12<br>Students<br>2006-2007 | Percent of<br>Students<br>Transported<br>2006-2007 | Number of<br>Infrastructure<br>Projects<br>2005-2009 | Description of<br>Infrastructure<br>Projects<br>2005-2009 | Infrastructure<br>Funding<br>Committed<br>2005-2009 |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Charlotte                       | 150,060                         | 0.8                                 | 204                                      | 8                                                | 17,888                                             | 42                                                 | 0                                                    |                                                           |                                                     |
| Collier                         | 315,258                         | 1.7                                 | 124                                      | 38                                               | 43,164                                             | 41                                                 | 1                                                    | Pedestrian<br>Bridge                                      | 142,240                                             |
| DeSoto                          | 33,991                          | 0.1                                 | 51                                       | 6                                                | 4,984                                              | 33                                                 | 0                                                    |                                                           |                                                     |
| Glades                          | 11,175                          | 0.06                                | 14                                       | 3                                                | 1,256                                              | 43                                                 | 0                                                    |                                                           |                                                     |
| Hardee                          | 28,888                          | 0.1                                 | 42                                       | 6                                                | 5,037                                              | 48                                                 | 0                                                    |                                                           |                                                     |
| Hendry                          | 39,453                          | 0.2                                 | 31                                       | 8                                                | 7,463                                              | 47                                                 | 0                                                    |                                                           |                                                     |
| Highlands                       | 100,011                         | 0.5                                 | 85                                       | 14                                               | 12,453                                             | 45                                                 | 1                                                    | Sidewalk<br>Construction                                  | 74,154                                              |
| Lee                             | 593,136                         | 3.2                                 | 548                                      | 64                                               | 78,980                                             | 54                                                 | 0                                                    |                                                           |                                                     |
| Manatee                         | 315,766                         | 1.7                                 | 356                                      | 52                                               | 42,242                                             | 35                                                 | 0                                                    |                                                           |                                                     |
| Okeechobee                      | 40,359                          | 0.2                                 | 46                                       | 8                                                | 7,289                                              | 50                                                 | 0                                                    |                                                           |                                                     |
| Polk                            | 580,594                         | 3.2                                 | 258                                      | 103                                              | 92,873                                             | 51                                                 | 1                                                    | Sidewalk<br>Construction                                  | 41,507                                              |
| Sarasota                        | 372,057                         | 2                                   | 570                                      | 28                                               | 42,190                                             | 50                                                 | 1                                                    | Traffic Calming<br>Devices                                | 35,605                                              |
| District wide<br>Total/ Average | 2,569,584                       | 13.76                               | 194                                      | 338                                              | 355,819                                            | 44.9                                               | 4                                                    |                                                           | 293,506                                             |

Table 6-7. District 2 Population and SRTS Project Data

|                                 | Estimated<br>Population<br>July 1,<br>2008 | Percent of<br>Florida<br>Population | Persons<br>per<br>Square<br>Mile<br>2000 | Number of<br>Elementary<br>and Middle<br>Schools | Enrollment<br>Pre-K - 12<br>2006-2007 | Percent of<br>Students<br>Transported<br>2006-2007 | Number of<br>Infrastructure<br>Projects<br>2005-2009 | Description of<br>Infrastructure<br>Projects<br>2005-2009 | Infrastructure<br>Funding<br>Committed<br>2005-2009 |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Alachua                         | 241,364                                    | 1.3                                 | 249                                      | 41                                               | 28,998                                | 48                                                 | 0                                                    |                                                           |                                                     |
| Baker                           | 26,164                                     | 0.1                                 | 38                                       | 5                                                | 4,974                                 | 50                                                 | 0                                                    |                                                           |                                                     |
| Bradford                        | 29,012                                     | 0.1                                 | 89                                       | 5                                                | 3,683                                 | 49                                                 | 0                                                    |                                                           |                                                     |
| Clay                            | 184,727                                    | 1                                   | 234                                      | 28                                               | 14,883                                | 42                                                 | 1                                                    | Sidewalk<br>Construction                                  | 16,395                                              |
| Columbia                        | 69,092                                     | 0.3                                 | 71                                       | 10                                               | 10,179                                | 48                                                 | 1                                                    | Bike Lane /<br>Sidewalk                                   | 466,928                                             |
| Dixie                           | 14,957                                     | 0.08                                | 20                                       | 3                                                | 2,241                                 | 57                                                 | 2                                                    | Bicycle Parking<br>/ Bike Lane &<br>Sidewalk              | 368,759                                             |
| Duval                           | 850,962                                    | 4.6                                 | 1006                                     | 137                                              | 125,171                               | 36                                                 | 0                                                    |                                                           |                                                     |
| Gilchrist                       | 17,191                                     | 0.09                                | 41                                       | 2                                                | 2,887                                 | 51                                                 | 0                                                    |                                                           |                                                     |
| Hamilton                        | 14,348                                     | 0.07                                | 26                                       | 3                                                | 2,036                                 | 47                                                 | 0                                                    |                                                           |                                                     |
| Lafayette                       | 8,013                                      | 0.04                                | 13                                       | 1                                                | 1,074                                 | 42                                                 | 0                                                    |                                                           |                                                     |
| Levy                            | 39,460                                     | 0.2                                 | 31                                       | 7                                                | 6,257                                 | 60                                                 | 0                                                    |                                                           |                                                     |
| Madison                         | 18,895                                     | 0.1                                 | 27                                       | 3                                                | 2,935                                 | 60                                                 | 0                                                    |                                                           |                                                     |
| Nassau                          | 69,835                                     | 0.3                                 | 88                                       | 12                                               | 10,938                                | 54                                                 | 0                                                    |                                                           |                                                     |
| Putnam                          | 73,459                                     | 0.4                                 | 98                                       | 16                                               | 12,101                                | 55                                                 | 0                                                    |                                                           |                                                     |
| St Johns                        | 181,540                                    | 1                                   | 202                                      | 26                                               | 26,922                                | 54                                                 | 0                                                    |                                                           |                                                     |
| Suwannee                        | 39,802                                     | 0.2                                 | 51                                       | 5                                                | 5,981                                 | 56                                                 | 1                                                    | Sidewalk<br>Construction                                  | 243,480                                             |
| Taylor                          | 21,546                                     | 0.1                                 | 18                                       | 4                                                | 3,420                                 | 47                                                 | 1                                                    | Sidewalk<br>Construction                                  | 281,791                                             |
| Union                           | 15,141                                     | 0.1                                 | 56                                       | 2                                                | 2,265                                 | 49                                                 | 0                                                    |                                                           |                                                     |
| District wide<br>Total/ Average | 1,915,508                                  | 10.08                               | 131                                      | 310                                              | 266,945                               | 50.3                                               | 6                                                    |                                                           | 1,377,353                                           |

Table 6-8. District 3 Population and SRTS Project Data

|                | Estimated<br>Population<br>2008 | Percent of<br>Florida<br>Population | Persons<br>per<br>Square<br>Mile | Number of<br>Elementary<br>and Middle<br>Schools | Number of<br>Pre-K-12<br>Students<br>2006-2007 | Percent of<br>Students<br>Transported<br>2006-2007 | Number of<br>Infrastructure<br>Projects 2007-<br>2009 | Description of<br>Infrastructure<br>Projects<br>2005-2009 | Infrastructure<br>Funding<br>Committed<br>2005-2009 |
|----------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Bay            | 163,946                         | 0.9                                 | 194                              | 27                                               | 27,005                                         | 44                                                 | 1                                                     | Sidewalk<br>Construction                                  | 266,656                                             |
| Calhoun        | 13,617                          | 0.07                                | 23                               | 2                                                | 2,227                                          | 50                                                 | 1                                                     | Sidewalk<br>Construction                                  | 285,308                                             |
| Escambia       | 302,939                         | 1.6                                 | 444                              | 51                                               | 42,708                                         | 55                                                 | 0                                                     |                                                           |                                                     |
| Franklin       | 11,202                          | 0.06                                | 20                               | 1                                                | 1,317                                          | 25                                                 | 0                                                     |                                                           |                                                     |
| Gadsden        | 47,560                          | 0.2                                 | 87                               | 13                                               | 6,650                                          | 64                                                 | 0                                                     |                                                           |                                                     |
| Gulf           | 15,667                          | 0.08                                | 24                               | 4                                                | 2,193                                          | 47                                                 | 0                                                     |                                                           |                                                     |
| Holmes         | 19,328                          | 0.1                                 | 39                               | 3                                                | 3,384                                          | 60                                                 | 0                                                     |                                                           |                                                     |
| Jackson        | 49,656                          | 0.2                                 | 51                               | 6                                                | 7,382                                          | 54                                                 | 1                                                     | Sidewalk<br>Construction                                  | 46,812                                              |
| Jefferson      | 14,547                          | 0.07                                | 22                               | 2                                                | 1,220                                          | 67                                                 | 0                                                     |                                                           |                                                     |
| Leon           | 264,063                         | 1.4                                 | 359                              | 34                                               | 32,383                                         | 34                                                 | 0                                                     |                                                           |                                                     |
| Liberty        | 7,957                           | 0.04                                | 8                                | 1                                                | 1,475                                          | 49                                                 | 1                                                     | Sidewalk<br>Construction                                  | 29,127                                              |
| Okaloosa       | 179,693                         | 0.9                                 | 182                              | 28                                               | 30,254                                         | 44                                                 | 1                                                     | Sidewalk<br>Construction                                  | 381,396                                             |
| Santa Rosa     | 150,053                         | 0.8                                 | 116                              | 25                                               | 25,392                                         | 52                                                 | 0                                                     |                                                           |                                                     |
| Wakulla        | 31,089                          | 0.2                                 | 38                               | 6                                                | 5,050                                          | 83                                                 | 0                                                     |                                                           |                                                     |
| Walton         | 53,837                          | 0.3                                 | 38                               | 9                                                | 6,704                                          | 59                                                 | 0                                                     |                                                           |                                                     |
| Washington     | 23,928                          | 0.1                                 | 36                               | 4                                                | 3,565                                          | 66                                                 | 0                                                     |                                                           |                                                     |
| District wide  |                                 |                                     |                                  |                                                  |                                                |                                                    |                                                       |                                                           |                                                     |
| Total/ Average | 1,349,082                       | 7.02                                | 105                              | 216                                              | 198,909                                        | 53.3                                               | 5                                                     |                                                           | 1,009,299                                           |

Table 6-9. District 4 Population and SRTS Project Data

|                                 | Estimated<br>Population<br>2008 | Percent of<br>Florida<br>Population | Persons<br>per<br>Square<br>Mile<br>2000 | Number of<br>Elementary<br>and Middle<br>Schools | Number of<br>Pre-K-12<br>Students<br>2006-2007 | Percent of<br>Students<br>Transported<br>2006-2007 | Number of<br>Infrastructure<br>Projects 2007-<br>2009 | Description of<br>Infrastructure<br>Projects<br>2005-2009 | Infrastructure<br>Funding<br>Committed<br>2005-2009 |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Broward                         | 1,751,234                       | 9.5                                 | 1347                                     | 107                                              | 262,726                                        | 29                                                 | 0                                                     |                                                           |                                                     |
| Indian River                    | 132,315                         | 0.7                                 | 225                                      | 21                                               | 17,611                                         | 47                                                 | 2                                                     | Sidewalk<br>Construction                                  | 530,000                                             |
| Martin                          | 138,660                         | 0.7                                 | 228                                      | 20                                               | 18,239                                         | 48                                                 | 0                                                     |                                                           |                                                     |
| Palm Beach                      | 1,265,293                       | 6.9                                 | 573                                      | 157                                              | 171,429                                        | 35                                                 | 2                                                     | Overhead<br>Signing /<br>Sidewalk<br>Construction         | 416,929                                             |
| St Lucie                        | 265,108                         | 1.4                                 | 337                                      | 23                                               | 38,786                                         | 61                                                 | 0                                                     |                                                           |                                                     |
| District wide<br>Total/ Average | 3,552,610                       | 19.2                                | 542                                      | 328                                              | 508,791                                        | 44                                                 | 4                                                     |                                                           | 946,929                                             |

Table 6-10. District 5 Population and SRTS Project Data

|                                           | Estimated<br>Population<br>2008 | Percent of<br>Florida<br>Population | Persons<br>per<br>Square<br>Mile<br>2000 | Number of<br>Elementary<br>and Middle<br>Schools | Number<br>of Pre-K-<br>12<br>Students<br>2006-<br>2007 | Percent of<br>Students<br>Transported<br>2006-2007 | Number of<br>Infrastructure<br>Projects<br>2007-2009 | Description of<br>Infrastructure<br>Projects<br>2005-2009 | Infrastructure<br>Funding<br>Committed<br>2005-2009 |
|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Brevard                                   | 536,521                         | 2.9                                 | 468                                      | 78                                               | 74,791                                                 | 40                                                 | 1                                                    | Sidewalk<br>Construction                                  | 36,293                                              |
| Flagler                                   | 91,247                          | 0.49                                | 103                                      | 9                                                | 12,149                                                 | 75                                                 | 0                                                    |                                                           |                                                     |
| Lake                                      | 307,243                         | 1.6                                 | 221                                      | 35                                               | 39,566                                                 | 44                                                 | 0                                                    |                                                           |                                                     |
| Marion                                    | 329,628                         | 1.7                                 | 164                                      | 41                                               | 42,570                                                 | 56                                                 | 1                                                    | Sidewalk<br>Construction                                  | 46,016                                              |
| Orange                                    | 1,072,801                       | 5.8                                 | 988                                      | 161                                              | 175,155                                                | 39                                                 | 1                                                    | Sidewalk<br>Construction                                  | 470,722                                             |
| Osceola                                   | 263,676                         | 1.4                                 | 131                                      | 29                                               | 51,881                                                 | 43                                                 | 0                                                    |                                                           |                                                     |
| Seminole                                  | 410,854                         | 2.2                                 | 1186                                     | 54                                               | 66,349                                                 | 41                                                 | 1                                                    | Sidewalk<br>Construction                                  | 35,085                                              |
| Sumter                                    | 74,721                          | 0.4                                 | 98                                       | 7                                                | 7,432                                                  | 41                                                 | 0                                                    |                                                           |                                                     |
| Volusia                                   | 498,036                         | 2.7                                 | 402                                      | 63                                               | 65,867                                                 | 39                                                 | 2                                                    | Sidewalk<br>Construction                                  | 77,555                                              |
| District wide/<br>County not<br>specified |                                 |                                     |                                          |                                                  |                                                        |                                                    |                                                      |                                                           |                                                     |
| Total/ Average                            | 3,584,727                       | 19.19                               | 418                                      | 477                                              | 535,760                                                | 46.4                                               | 6                                                    |                                                           | 665,671                                             |

Table 6-11. District 6 Population and SRTS Project Data

|                | Estimated<br>Population<br>2008 | Percent of<br>Florida<br>Population | Persons<br>per<br>Square<br>Mile<br>2000 | Number of<br>Elementary<br>and Middle<br>Schools | Number of<br>Pre-K-12<br>Students<br>2006-2007 | Percent of<br>Students<br>Transported<br>2006-2007 | Number of<br>Infrastructure<br>Projects<br>2007-2009 | Description of<br>Infrastructure<br>Projects<br>2005-2009 | Infrastructure<br>Funding<br>Committed<br>2005-2009 |
|----------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Miami-Dade     | 2,398,245                       | 13                                  | 1,158                                    | 294                                              | 353,783                                        | 16                                                 | 2                                                    | Sidewalk<br>Construction                                  | 2,130,498                                           |
| Monroe         | 72,243                          | 0.4                                 | 80                                       | 9                                                | 8,375                                          | 39                                                 | 0                                                    |                                                           |                                                     |
| Total/ Average | 2,470,488                       | 13.4                                | 619                                      | 303                                              | 362,158                                        | 27.5                                               | 2                                                    |                                                           | 2,130,498                                           |

Table 6-12. District 7 Population and SRTS Project Data

|                                           | Estimated<br>Population<br>2008 | Percent of<br>Florida<br>Population | Persons<br>per<br>Square<br>Mile<br>2000 | Number of<br>Elementary<br>and Middle<br>Schools | Number<br>of Pre-K-<br>12<br>Students<br>2006-<br>2007 | Percent of<br>Students<br>Transported<br>2006-2007 | Number of<br>Infrastructure<br>Projects 2007-<br>2009 | Description of<br>Infrastructure<br>Projects<br>2005-2009 | Infrastructure<br>Funding<br>Committed<br>2005-2009 |
|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Citrus                                    | 141,416                         | 0.7                                 | 202                                      | 14                                               | 16,077                                                 | 59                                                 | 0                                                     |                                                           |                                                     |
| Hernando                                  | 171,689                         | 0.9                                 | 274                                      | 14                                               | 22,447                                                 | 59                                                 | 0                                                     |                                                           |                                                     |
| Hillsborough                              | 1,180,784                       | 6.4                                 | 951                                      | 201                                              | 193,480                                                | 39                                                 | 2                                                     | Safety Project                                            | 216,387                                             |
| Pasco                                     | 471,028                         | 2.6                                 | 463                                      | 60                                               | 64,588                                                 | 51                                                 | 1                                                     | Safety Project                                            | 298,000                                             |
| Pinellas                                  | 910,260                         | 5                                   | 3,291                                    | 109                                              | 109,880                                                | 40                                                 | 3                                                     | Safety Project                                            | 814,481                                             |
| District wide/<br>County not<br>specified |                                 |                                     |                                          |                                                  |                                                        |                                                    |                                                       |                                                           | 2,217,612                                           |
| Total / Average                           | 2,875,177                       | 15.6                                | 1036                                     | 398                                              | 406,472                                                | 49.6                                               | 6                                                     |                                                           | 3,546,480                                           |

## CHAPTER 7 DISCUSSION

### **Discussion of Finding and Methods**

This study has examined the effects of a decentralized framework on the SRTS program implementation in Florida. Information has been collected regarding the local implementers perspectives on the impacts of Federal mandates and State guidelines. Those perspectives were then used to support an analysis of project distribution across FDOT's seven districts. This study has shown that certain characteristics of the statute influence the actions of the implementing organization which in turn determines the progress and acceptance of the program at the street level. Successful implementation of the SRTS is achievable through a more comprehensive understanding of the interactions within the hierarchy and through the consideration of recommendations made later in this chapter.

### **Barriers Created by the Federal Law & State Guidelines**

The SRTS mandate can be categorized as a Type B Mandate (Montjoy et al. 1979) in that it has a high level of specificity and it provides new resources granting an opportunity for organizational change under the guidelines of the policy statement. The FDOT districts in this case are expected to establish new routines in order to carry out the prescribed actions, however, the resources provided are minimal compared to those provided for the programs within the existing routines.

What seems to be the principal issue mentioned by all parties interviewed is the disproportionate time-cost commitment of complying with both the federal mandates and the state guidelines. District coordinators are searching for ways to streamline the process while applicants are weighing the worth of the project compared to the staff time needed. Title 23 regulations are not necessary because the competitive nature of the project motivates

coordinators to award projects that get a “bigger bang for the buck” rather than those that would require acquisition of ROW or lengthy environmental assessments. The reimbursement of project funds, as seen earlier, is creating the largest barrier to participation by rural and low-income communities which is counter-productive to SAFETEA-LU’s primary objectives. The rural and low-income communities may, in fact, be in more need of sidewalk connectivity and education programs because they are put at automatic disadvantages by the built environment and social demographics. Children from low-income communities in particular are often forced to walk or bicycle to school because they usually come from dual income households that are restrained by a single vehicle or regularly utilize public transportation. Rural advocates are much more skeptical of the long-term benefits provided by SRTS and so community interest levels are low on top of tighter budgets. Coordinators in rural and low-income communities are forced to commit a higher percentage of their time to identify areas of need, educate those areas on the SRTS program, assist them with applications, and execute in-house contracting in order to get any interest.

Retracting Title 23 Regulations would simultaneously negate the need for LAP requirements for non-traditional recipients at the state level further streamlining the process and decreasing the number of decision-makers and decision-making points which may create tension at the intra-organizational level. It seems as though applicants would rather work directly with the district coordinator rather than having to partner with the LAP agency or become LAP certified.

Although the policy is specific but still grants a range of flexibility its mandates are creating an imbalanced trade-off that directly affects the successful implementation of the program. Florida, in response to organizing a decentralized system around these mandates has

further lengthened the implementation in an effort to simplify the process and follow the existing FDOT framework. The literature establishes that specificity is necessary to eliminate local implementer discretion, but without adequate resources, which in this case is time and staff, the specific mandates transform into deterrents of implementation rather than facilitators of it.

### **Decentralization: Benefits & Trade-offs**

The research found that the decentralized framework under which the SRTS program is administered in Florida results in varying degrees of implementation progress within the seven districts. As of July 2009 45% of the SRTS apportioned funds have been obligated with 25 counties seeing the benefits of infrastructure investments and all but one county receiving a portion of the non-infrastructure component. Further, stakeholder and inter-organizational participation was observed to significantly influential in some regions and steadily growing. The very few impediments that were exposed are inherent to the organization and should be dealt with accordingly. There are benefits and trade-offs to the decentralized framework as there would be with any organization format chosen, as discussed below.

#### **Benefits**

According to the literature the SRTS program and its implementation follows the organizational model's standards. The SRTS enacting legislation is clear in its mandates but purposely provides flexibility to the states to develop a creative and encouraging program that meets the needs of the specific needs of the state. Florida essentially provides the same flexibility by granting the districts sovereignty in administering the program yet the districts are fully aware of their expected actions and although their progress may be different they all fall into the set parameters of the federal mandates and the state guidelines.

Florida's district profiles are quite diverse as seen in chapter 6. Some districts are urban, some are rural and others are both. The challenges of children's' active commuting to school in a

dense urban areas such as Miami-Dade are immensely different than what the rural areas such as Liberty County face. The value of the district coordinators is in their ability to form relationships with the eligible applicants and to maintain a network of advocates. What was observed by the researcher is that this program is largely dependent upon the people who choose to champion it. Because the program is decentralized and requires multiple actors to participate in its execution, information and education on the program is more widespread and the chances of finding a champion are increased. District 1's coordinator is the perfect example. Although some may have been discouraged by the lack of interest of the community in the first cycle she refused to surrender the program as a failure and chose to become its champion. CTST's have over-exceeded expectations in some districts while non-profit contracts have been made available in others. Each district can have a have a different set of champions that feel directly included in the implementation and milestones of the program; an extremely important characteristic for building sustainable momentum.

The SAFETEA-LU legislation is concerned with equitable investments across rural, suburban, and urban areas to ensure equal access to the benefits provided by federal dollars. Decentralizing the program in Florida has ensured rural areas are allocated SRTS funding based on the apportionment ratio. Whether the most rural of the counties within the district receive the funding is a decision that should be made on a needs basis, although it could be inferred that at this premature stage of the program rural areas are not receiving an overwhelming response. Therefore, coordinators are left to target specific regions and make unilateral decisions on the areas that could receive the largest benefit from the infrastructure. In this case, is it better to actually put the money where children are more likely to walk to school or in areas where the built environment isn't conducive to walking to school but sidewalks are clearly needed for basic

connectivity? This is a question that may never be answered under an act that targets equitable safety.

### **Trade-Offs**

Although recognized as a benefit in the majority of situations, the individualized district networks do have a downfall in very few cases. Counties in districts 6 and 7 illustrate the imbalanced benefits received by some but not by others. Safe Kids and Walk Safe provide an invaluable resource to the district organization in addition to the beneficiaries of the programs they are dedicated to. Students in Pinellas, Pasco, Hillsborough, and Miami-Dade have the advantage of being educated and trained by professionals who solely dedicated their time to the prevention of children's pedestrian injury and have an extensive network of supporting advocates. In an ideal scenario, all the districts would have the opportunity to contract with non-profits for non-infrastructure programs that would be implemented across all the counties.

The most common trade-off of a decentralized program, which the researcher experienced first-hand, is the non-standardized evaluations and availability of data. Neither the federal or state mandates require any form of evaluation although it is strongly encouraged. As a result, the records are kept because they are required to be but the data is not organized in a consistent fashion that is easily understandable to even to the State Coordinator. Each project is sequenced within the work program to record its most recent phase by the 5YWP, but each district adheres to different sequencing patterns. At this stage in the program it is very difficult to accurately evaluate the program and its implementation and it may always be since all the FDOT programming within each district follows the same guidelines.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations were formulated based on the analysis of project distribution and the implementer interviews. The researcher will only address characteristics of

the state and district programs recognizing that the federal statute will be reformulated in its reauthorization in 2009.

### **Funding**

It is the researcher's recommendation that the state in coordination with the districts create a small project cost funding range in which, small projects can be kept cost-effective through in-house design and engineering or design and build contracts depending on the ideal project timeline. This includes providing the up-front funding for the applicant if they cannot provide it themselves. This should incentivize rural and low-income communities to participate in addition to cutting costs and project delay. The thresholds assigned should be reasonable.

### **Application**

First, the infrastructure application should be streamlined for non-traditional applicants. The districts and state should encourage schools and school boards to be the dominant applicants because that level of interest transfers onto the PTA, the teachers, and the students. When the school as a whole is engaged it can be assumed that number of students walking and bicycling to school will increase and parents, the ultimate variable in the equation, will too participate. An interview with Jason Jackman, a researcher at the Center for Urban Transportation Research at the University of South Florida who has focused his studies on observing the behaviors of parents and teachers in schools receiving SRTS funds, revealed an observation that parents are more likely to become involved and pedestrian chaperone their children to school on a regular basis after doing it only once. Effectively encouraging non-traditional applicants may have a stronger influence on the interventions primary target group. In response to shortening the application, district coordinators should be required to complete a site visit after a preliminary evaluation of applications.

Second, a standard project award panel should be utilized in each district for all infrastructure awards. Non-infrastructure applications may have the option of creating a review panel since applications are received on a rolling schedule. Review panels should include CTST members, law enforcement, and school board members at the least. Citizen participants should be encouraged and solicited through school events. Expanding the network of SRTS participants increases the chances of finding a community champion and establishes a stronger feeling of inclusion by those with influence at the local level.

### **Non-Infrastructure Partnerships**

Service Contracts should be awarded for non-infrastructure projects where available. DOTs have been formed to primarily deal with the design, engineering, and construction of motor vehicle facilities so they may not be fully equipped to deal with the non-infrastructure component of the program. Instilling pedestrian safety awareness and traffic education in children requires a very specific set of training skills directed toward a population group not necessarily focused on by DOTs. Coordination with non-traditional partners is a critical implementation point in order for the SRTS Program to reach its full potential.

Barriers to such non-profit partnerships should be overcome by recognizing that educational components of any type are most successful when they are consistently repeated in the same manner. A partnership with the FTBS program should be further explored to coordinate a “train-the-trainer” program with existing non-infrastructure campaigns so the student education can be reinforced throughout the year rather than only one week per school year.

### **Reschedule Infrastructure and Non-Infrastructure Timelines to coincide with the School Year and Project Completion**

Ideally the call for applications would open close to the end of the school year. Announcing an award at an inopportune time adds to the source of project delay. If applications

are streamlined the call could have a shorter submittal period and the applications would be reviewed over the summer and awards would be announced at the beginning of the school year. The contracting process in Florida takes at minimum a year and during this time educational trainings should be taking place to build up excitement for the project's completion in the next school year. Construction should then take place over the summer after project awards have been announced when traffic is lighter.

## CHAPTER 8 CONCLUSIONS

Policy implementation requires a gentle balance between technocratic support and democratic flexibility with the provision of adequate resources. Florida's SRTS program has achieved this goal by decentralizing its statewide program and granting sovereignty to local implementers. The external effects of the policy mandates would have greatly disturbed the organizational framework of the administering organization if the program was implemented in a standard centralized manner. By decentralizing the program the time commitment burdens were distributed across the seven districts, and the benefits have been localized to the community needs through personalized and inclusive relationship.

As the SRTS program continues to mature and program awareness becomes more widespread evaluating the effects of implementation will become easier and will be able to be more detail oriented. It is recommended that a similar study be conducted once the first cycle of awards has been closed scheduled for 2012. As the program advances it will be easier to identify those districts who have properly planned for the future of the project and those who were late in adopting and adapting to the changes in the organizational routine caused by the mandates.

The methods used to conduct the analysis of this thesis found no identifiable patterns of infrastructure project awards but as mentioned earlier, this may be a result of early evaluation of a program that has not yet fully adapted. It can be comfortably concluded that non-infrastructure projects have shown to be the most effective when they are implemented by organizations and non-profits committed. It can be concluded at this point that Florida's program is being efficiently implemented with almost 50% of its funds obligated as of 2009. Since the first cycle was awarded in 2007 it would seem that the obligation of funding is aligned with the 5YWP.

The recommendations made are only minor reformulations to the state's implementation and will hopefully provoke thought and analysis on how to make a program that is already up against the odds in a society that prefers convenience over health function in a more efficient manner that increases the desire of local communities to participate. The program has a ton of potential and Florida's decentralized model should be considered for imitation across all the states, specifically the larger ones.

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## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Lauren DeLarco was born in Dunedin, Florida in 1984. She grew up in Palm Harbor, Florida and graduated from Tarpon Springs High School with Honors in 2002. Lauren attended the University of Central Florida and graduated in August of 2006 with university honors and a degree in Political Science with a focus in International Affairs. After graduating Lauren worked with an Orlando general contractor as a business development representative acting as a liaison to clients and project managers, as well as, being responsible for new client development and the marketing business plan. As a graduate student at the University of Florida in the Department of Urban and Regional Planning, Lauren worked on an assistantship with Assistant Faculty Member Dr. Ruth Steiner. As a research assistant Lauren served as a team member on a VMT-based mobility fee project in support of the Florida Department of Transportation's exploration of alternatives to transportation concurrency and on a Safe Routes to School Project that is currently reviewing the progress of implementation across the nation. Lauren performed a six month internship with the Orange County Planning Division where she worked in coordination with the Research Section. During her time at the University of Florida Lauren traveled abroad to Brazil to research planning and development in developing countries and was awarded the Judith Mucci Scholarship by the Orlando Metro Section of the Florida American Planning Association.