Road Safety Assessment (RSA)
Official Procedure for LA DOTD

09/2010

Definition

A Road Safety Assessment (RSA) is a safety performance evaluation conducted by a multi-disciplinary / multi-agency team. It qualitatively estimates and reports potential road safety issues and identifies opportunities for low-cost safety improvements. The aim of a RSA is to answer the following questions:

- What elements of the road may present a safety concern: to what extent, to which road users, and under what circumstances?
- What opportunities exist to eliminate or mitigate identified safety concerns?

Team Members and Roles

1. DOTD Highway Safety Section Personnel – RSA Coordinator
2. DOTD District Traffic Operations Engineer – will use their knowledge of traffic engineering for guidance.
3. DOTD District Design Engineer – will use their knowledge of design and safety improvements for guidance.
4. DOTD Parish Maintenance Superintendent – will attend the RSA giving information on any roadway issues, concerns and history.
5. City/Parish Public Works Representative – will attend the RSA, giving guidance for the site.
6. Jurisdictional law enforcement agency or agencies – will provide expertise concerning crashes and crash trends/patterns for the area.
7. FHWA Area Engineer – will attend the RSA if Federal-aid and Full Oversight* project, providing guidance on federal requirements, design and construction. If Federal-aid project is delegated, the FHWA Area Engineer will attend on a case-by-case basis, as determined by FHWA.

*Full Oversight = NHS Interstate Project > $1 million and NHS Non Interstate > $10 million

Others that may be invited are the MPO, DOTD Project Engineer, Systems Preservation Program Manager, SHSP Regional Coalition Member, local officials, and other local road users. DOTD Headquarters (Highway Safety Section) will also be responsible for providing contact information and coordination with jurisdictional law enforcement agencies.

The DOTD Highway Safety Section is responsible for providing technical assistance, guidance, and expertise in crash data analysis as requested by the District. Countermeasures considered should be low cost in nature and follow guidance provided in the following publications:

- DOTD's Guidance For Safety Improvements For PRR Projects
- National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) 500 Series
- Traffic Engineers Handbook, 9th Edition
- Good Practices: Incorporating Safety into Resurfacing and Restoration Projects
- Mitigation Strategies for Design Exceptions, Federal Highway Administration, July 2007

This report is prepared solely for the purpose of identifying, evaluating and planning safety improvements on public roads; and is therefore exempt from discovery or admission under 23 U.S.C. 409.1

The RSA Coordinator will provide the RSA schedule to District personnel and DOTD Headquarters (Systems Preservation Section and Traffic Engineering Management Section) so they will have adequate advance notice of upcoming RSAs. The RSA Coordinator will distribute data to the team members before the pre-briefing meeting.

Pre-Briefing Meeting

Once the date of the Onsite Visit is scheduled by the RSA Coordinator, the pre-briefing meeting will be scheduled. Team members will meet at a designated location in the district. Those team members not located nearby may be included by telephone conference call.

During the Pre-Briefing, discussion should include the crash data, photolog images, maps, purpose of the assessment, expectations, and team member roles/responsibilities. The team members will decide the location and time to meet for the Assessment. The team should decide who will be responsible for photography and note taking at the RSA. The note taker/report writer will be a team member from the DOTD District Office. That person must take notes of the comments made at the pre-briefing meeting and at the onsite visit so that the final RSA can be prepared. The DOTD District Traffic Operations Engineer and/or the DOTD District Design Engineer will provide the cost estimates for the recommended countermeasures.

Onsite Visit

The team shall conduct a field review of the project. The team should focus on safety and consider all road users and environmental conditions (day, night, rain, fog, ice, etc.). The note taker should document comments of all team members. The assigned photographer should take several pictures of the site from different angles. All team members should discuss with the group their perspectives as pertains to their individual area of expertise. The recommended improvements of all the team members shall be documented by location.

After the project has been reviewed, the team shall discuss and reach a consensus regarding the recommended countermeasures.

Writing the RSA Report

A format has been designed to assist in writing the RSA report:

A **Cover Page** with project name and location and a signature box should be placed on the front of the report.

The **Header** describes the location and date of the project.
Example Header:

Road Safety Assessment Review
State Project No.:
Parish:
State Route:
Control Section/Begin:
Control Section/End:
Date of Review:

Description of Project including Purpose and Need describes the project and provides information.

Team Members is a list of the team members, their titles, and agencies.

Information Used in the Review is a list of all data used in conducting the RSA.

Pre-Briefing Summary gives clearly stated safety-related observations derived from the crash data summary report (i.e. in office crash data analysis).

Observations describe what was actually seen during the Onsite Visit. Photographs taken during the Onsite Visit (preferred) or from the Visidata Photolog should be included for clarity.

Recommendations give exact details of recommended countermeasures to be implemented as part of the project. Implementation by either district or contract forces should be specifically stated in the report. If recommendations fall outside the scope of the project, the recommendations should be proposed to DOTD Headquarters (Highway Safety Section) for inclusion in the Highway Safety Improvement Program.

A **Cost Estimate** shall be provided for *each* recommended countermeasure. It should be prepared by the DOTD District Traffic Operations Engineer and/or DOTD District Design Engineer.

A **Map** shall be included noting the locations and recommended countermeasures within the project limits. The RSA Coordinator will be responsible for obtaining the map for the report.

Final Report

The final report shall be submitted to the DOTD District Administrator (DA) for approval. Following the DA's approval, the document is to be sent to HQ for formal response by the Systems Preservation and/or Highway Safety Section. The formal response shall be sent to the DA for inclusion into the plans, as applicable.