

1 Background

The Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Community of Practice (CoP) facilitates the exchange of insights, experiences, and noteworthy practices among SS4A grant recipients to identify context-sensitive solutions and enhance safety-related outcomes. To achieve that goal, the SS4A hosts regular peer exchange meetings for grant recipients to share information with one another. The peer exchange meetings are designed to facilitate mutual learning and collaborative problem solving.

The April 17, 2025, Peer Exchange meeting focused on the [Leadership Commitment component](#) of Comprehensive Safety Action Plans (Action Plans). Below is a summary of key takeaways from the meeting.

2 Summary from Fireside Chat on Leadership Commitment

Dr. David Scott, Special Projects Director from the East Texas Council of Governments (ETCOG) (Fiscal Year 2023 Planning and Demonstration Grant recipient) discussed how ETCOG secured leadership commitment and maintained ongoing engagement to maximize the impact of their Action Plan.

During the conversation, Dr. Scott emphasized the importance of:

- Learning the preferences and values of leadership (Mayor, City Council, Tribal Council, Metropolitan Planning Organization Policy Board, etc.) to effectively tailor roadway safety stories and corresponding messaging. Examples include:
 - collecting and sharing roadway safety data and roadway safety challenges that will most resonate and align with leaders' existing priorities;
 - using storytelling to convey data in a compelling way; and
 - communicating with leadership using their preferred means (e.g., emails, meetings, text messages).
- Using visual media, such as charts, one-pagers, or infographics, to relay information and draw attention to the issues.
- Engaging with leadership early, often, and regularly, including with political candidates, to get the commitment needed for setting safety goals to make an Action Plan successful.
- Cultivating relationships beyond the scope of the SS4A project work, so there is a strong foundation of trust with leadership.
- Setting a cadence for evaluation and feedback on the performance of the Action Plan.

The conversation also touched on how ETCOG's leadership commitment and ongoing collaboration influenced the roadway safety projects they worked on and how their leadership played a role in creating a culture of safety in the community.

3 Main Takeaways from Breakout Rooms

Note: Multiple leaders in the community can express a commitment to an Action Plan, but SS4A grant recipients need formal approval from the necessary authority or decision-making body to officially adopt an Action Plan. The adopted Action Plan must include the date of approval and be published on a publicly accessible webpage.

Strategies for SS4A grant recipients working to secure a leadership commitment:

- Relay the importance of roadway safety in their specific community. Personalize the roadway safety story for leadership to make it impactful, relatable, and concise, rather than focusing solely on crash data. This is particularly helpful when first engaging with leadership.
- Communicate to leadership that creating an Action Plan can serve as the first step in securing future funding to implement roadway safety strategies in their community. This highlights the benefit of committing to an Action Plan.
- Engage with members of their community to collect their input and support. Public input demonstrates that the community is invested in making changes to improve roadway safety and encourages leaders, particularly elected officials, to provide their support.
- Document roadway safety discussions with leadership, when feasible. Documenting decisions or solutions helps communities avoid repeating or relitigating previous discussions while also maintaining consistent commitment, especially amid leadership turnover.
- Engage with leadership early and often to better incorporate their input in the roadway safety planning process and understand any reservations they may have for committing to an Action Plan.
- Publicly report your roadway safety progress (e.g., posting on social media, sharing content for local newspapers, updating a website) to demonstrate areas of success to leadership. Find ways to celebrate success in coordination with leadership.
- Secure a leadership commitment by building a strong network, including with advocates or other leaders who can champion your Action Plan on your behalf. Having a strong network of support also helps maintain consistency amid leadership changes.
- When feasible, pass resolutions that include language on how to secure future funding, meet local match requirements, engage with the community, etc. Documentation and codifying decisions can help demonstrate what was previously agreed upon and reduce backtracking.