

**Executive Committee for Highway Safety  
Older Driver Safety  
Working Group Meeting Minutes – Mtg. #6**

**August 17, 2006**

**Location:**

UNC Highway Safety Research Center, Chapel Hill @ 10:00 a.m.

**Attending:**

Jane Stutts, Chair	UNC Highway Safety Research Center
Kristen Bovid	UNC School of Government (guest of committee)
Phyllis Bridgeman	NC DHHS Division of Aging and Adult Services
Sarah Davis	AAA Carolinas
Davis Fort	Physician, retired
Kathy Goff	National MS Society, Eastern NC Chapter
Frank Hackney	NC Governor's Highway Safety Program
Kevin Lacy	NC DOT Traffic Engineering & Safety Systems Branch
Major David Munday	NC State Highway Patrol
Libby Thomas	UNC Highway Safety Research Center
Carol Williams	NC Assistive Technology Program
Frank Winecoff	Engineer, retired
Jenny Womack	UNC School of Medicine, Division of Occupational Science

**Minutes:**

Jane welcomed everyone to HSRC and introduced two guests in attendance: Libby Thomas, who is on the Center's research staff, and Kristen Bovid, a graduate student in the UNC School of Government. Ms. Bovid is interested in studying policies related to physician reporting of at-risk older drivers as part of her master's degree requirements at UNC, and will be working with members of our group to develop her research project. Committee members were asked to introduce themselves for the benefit of the guests. Jane noted that several members of the committee were unable to attend the meeting and indicated she would be trying to schedule a separate meeting in September specifically to involve these members in developing strategies for identifying and assisting high risk older drivers. She also stressed the importance of knowing in advance who would be attending the working group meetings so that an appropriate agenda could be proposed.

The agenda offered for the day's meeting included an update of the Coalition's activities (Car Fit Training and the Senior Driver Safety and Mobility Options Forums), finalizing the committee's roadway-related strategies, and beginning to develop strategies for increasing public/community awareness of older driver safety and mobility issues. There were no recommended additions or changes to this agenda.

**Update on Coalition Activities**

Sarah Davis described the CarFit training event that AAA Carolinas had hosted at their Charlotte office August 11-12. CarFit is a new national program that was developed by the American Society on Aging in cooperation with AARP, AAA, and the American Occupational Therapy Association (see [www.asaging.org/carfit/](http://www.asaging.org/carfit/)). The program is designed to educate seniors about how aging can affect how they fit in their vehicle and suggest ways they can correct for the changes so that they can continue driving safely and comfortably. For example, volunteers guide seniors in checking to be sure that they can see at least three inches above the wheel of the car, that they have at least 10-12 inches between them and the steering wheel, and that their seatbelt is properly adjusted across their body. North Carolina is one of the first states to participate in the national rollout of the program. Participants in the Charlotte workshop (including several members of the Coalition) received training for coordinating and hosting CarFit events, and will also help to recruit and train volunteers to assist in carrying out the events. Several CarFit events have already been scheduled at locations across the state with support from AARP and AAA Carolinas. Jane commented that the presence of the Coalition, with key partners already working together to address older driver safety issues, was a strong factor in bringing the CarFit program to the state and being able to quickly launch events.

Jane Stutts and Phyllis Bridgeman updated members on the Senior Driver Safety and Mobility Options Forums that have been held in Greensboro and Southern Pines, with additional forums scheduled for Waynesville (August 24) and Raleigh (August 30, since rescheduled for November 16). These events have typically brought together 15-25 members of the community including Safe Community representatives, aging services providers, city and county engineers and planners, law enforcement, driver licensing officials, and local citizens and AARP members. A copy of the agenda for the Waynesville Forum is attached to these minutes. The overall goal of these forums has been to bring together key stakeholders within a community and provide them the motivation, information and resources needed to improve safety and mobility for their older residents.

There was some discussion of the need to provide alternative transportation so that older adults are not forced to continue driving once their health and driving skills have deteriorated. Dr. Fort noted the importance of involving a third party – someone other than a member of the immediate family – in helping older adults make the decision to stop driving and encouraging them to learn about and use available transportation alternatives. Phyllis noted that one purpose of the forums the Coalition has been hosting is to educate all involved parties about available resources within the community. Jane asked the group to keep these thoughts in mind when discussing potential strategies for increasing public awareness about older driver safety issues.

### **Roadway Strategies**

Kevin Lacy reported on the group's proposed strategy for improving signage on multi-lane roadways that utilize a non-traditional turning approach to access a limited access highway. New signage was developed to address the problem and presented to key DOT staff last month. Following a favorable reception, Kevin's office is providing funding to finalize the signs and install them at 10 locations across the state over the next couple of months. Although steps have already been taken to pilot test the strategy, Kevin indicated that our group should still prepare a formal strategy to present to the ECHS at its October meeting. Jane volunteered to help finalize

this strategy, drawing from the drafts that had been prepared earlier by Dr. Fort and Frank Winecoff.

Kevin also noted that the roadway subcommittee had developed an approach for identifying intersection locations across the state that may be especially hazardous for older drivers, based on either a high number or high percentage of older driver crashes. He indicated that his office would be willing to identify ~25 of these locations annually and conduct a more detailed examination of crash patterns at these sites in order to recommend design or operational changes to improve their safety. As part of this process, input would be solicited from older drivers living in the area. Kevin noted that AARP, Safe Community Coalitions, and AAA might all assist in recruiting volunteers to provide input to the process. If incorporated into DOT's Annual Highway Safety Improvement Plan, recommended improvements to state roadways could be funded using available Hazard Elimination funds. Cities could also be encouraged to provide funding for local roadway improvements. Jane noted that she had included reference to such regular monitoring of high crash locations in her draft strategy to train state and local engineers and planners using FHWA's Older Driver Highway Design Guide, but it was agreed that this might also be pulled out as a separate strategy for presentation to the ECHS. Sarah Davis added that AAA might be interested in identifying potentially dangerous locations on its maps, and also suggested that attendees at our recent Forums might be a good resource to tap for local input. Dr. Fort commented that identifying high risk intersections in local newspapers can help pressure action by local governments, and it was noted that some larger cities (e.g., Charlotte) already had programs in place to identify high crash sites and implement improvements.

As with the intersection signage strategy, steps have also been taken to move ahead in bringing the FHWA Older Driver Highway Design workshops to the state. Jane reported that current plans call for offering three one-day workshops at different locations in the state during a one-week period early next year, most likely in February or March. The workshops will be taught by Gene Amparano and another person from the FHWA Resource Center's Safety and Design Team (at the official request of Brad Hibbs in FHWA's Raleigh office). In addition, we have requested that at least one of the workshops be a "train the trainer" event, so that NCDOT will be able to offer future workshops at other locations. Kevin noted that there may be problems in identifying individuals willing to be trained to lead future workshops, as well as promoting the workshops to local engineers and planners. He also indicated that the workshops should be "cost neutral," i.e., any costs involved in offering the workshops should be recouped from workshop fees. However, fees should be kept as low as possible so as not to discourage attendance. In exchange for their fees, workshop participants would receive CEUs that would help them maintain their professional license.

Currently the Working Group plans to finalize write-ups of all three of these roadway strategies for formal presentation to the ECHS at its scheduled October 24 meeting. Jane will be sending copies of the strategies to members of the committee for review and comment prior to its next scheduled meeting (October 4).

### **Increasing Public Awareness**

After a short break for lunch, members reconvened to discuss development of a strategy for increasing awareness of older driver safety issues among older adults and their family members,

as well as among physicians and other professionals. Jane noted that part of GHSP's continued support to the Coalition in the coming year was to assist in the development of an older driver web site, with help from the NCDOT Information Technology Division<sup>1</sup>. To convey a sense of the "look" of such a web site and stimulate discussion of the types of information that might be conveyed via such a site, Jane displayed the following web sites from Florida, Oregon, Michigan, and Virginia:

Florida Transportation Lifetime Choices

<http://www.hsmv.state.fl.us/ddl/tips.html>

Oregon Shifting Gears in Later Years

[http://www.oregonsafemobility.org/safe\\_mobility.html](http://www.oregonsafemobility.org/safe_mobility.html)

Oregon Medically At-Risk Driver Program

<http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/DMV/ATRISK/index.shtml>

Michigan ACTS Older Driver Tool Kit

<http://townsafety.com/ACTSweb/ODT/overview.htm>

Virginia Granddriver

<http://www.granddriver.net/>

Some of the categories of information that could be made available on such a web site include

- How aging can affect driving performance and safety;
- Driver licensing requirements and other frequently requested information from the NC Driver License Handbook;
- Data on older driver crash involvement by state/county/city;
- Opportunities for participating in driver education and improvement programs (such as the AARP Driver Safety Course and CarFit);
- Driver self-assessment tools and booklets (pdf files) (but note that copyright issues would need to be addressed);
- Information on how to report a potentially at-risk driver to the DMV Medical Review Branch;
- Information and reporting forms for physician use;
- Names and contact information for occupational therapists and others qualified to conduct clinical and behind-the-wheel driving assessments;
- Information on accessing alternative transportation;
- Links to other web sites and sources of information (NC AARP, AAA Carolinas, NC Assistive Technology, AOTA, ASA/CDC Drive Well, etc.)

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<sup>1</sup> A decision has since been made not to provide any continued support to HSRC for Coalition activities. Instead, DOT's Traffic Safety Division will be responsible for funding and overseeing the implementation of any strategies recommended by the Working Group and approved by the DOT Executive Committee for Highway Safety.

Jane encouraged members of the group to continue to think about the audiences we want to target and the kinds of information we think should be included on such a web site, and to e-mail her ideas at any time.

There was some discussion of the most appropriate agency to host such a web site, with a general consensus that the NC DHHS Division on Aging and Adult Services would be a better choice than NC DOT/DMV. Phyllis Bridgeman said that she would discuss this possibility with her director and let us know whether this is an option. Regardless of who actually hosts the web site, it would be important for the site to link to other key agencies and organizations (and vice versa). Also, it is important that the site be user friendly and kept up-to-date. Jenny Womack noted that there may be opportunities to look for small grant funding through the University/Center for Public Service to help support the development of such a site, and some other potential funding sources were mentioned.

**Medical Subcommittee**

Jane indicated that, given the inability of some key members of the Coalition to attend today’s meeting (in particular, our DMV Medical Review Branch and NC Medical Society representatives), she would be trying to convene a smaller subcommittee meeting some time in September, before the next full Working Group meeting. All interested persons are invited to participate in this meeting.

**Action Items**

Name	Item
Jane Stutts	Prepare drafts of the (1) intersection signage and (2) identification and treatment of high older driver crash location strategies and submit to Kevin (as well as Dr. Fort and Frank Winecoff) for review and comment. Send revised drafts of all three roadway strategies to the full working group for review and comment prior to our next scheduled meeting.
Kevin Lacy	Edit Jane’s drafts of the intersection signage and identification of high crash location strategies (with input from Dr. Fort and Frank).
Jane Stutts	Prepare an initial draft of the Public Awareness/ Web Site strategy for review by members of the education subcommittee. (Pending response, we may also try to have this strategy ready to present to the ECHS at its <b>October 24</b> meeting.)
Phyllis Bridgeman	Check on feasibility of DAAS hosting a senior driver safety and mobility web site.
ALL	Provide ideas on target audiences, content, and potential sources of funding for a NC senior driver safety and mobility web site. Also, please email any ideas for naming and marketing such a web site.
ALL	Review and comment on any draft strategies distributed prior to our next scheduled meeting.

**Next Meeting:**

The next meeting of the full Coalition/Working Group is scheduled for **Wednesday, October 4,** at the AARP offices in Raleigh.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:20 pm.

**North Carolina Senior Driver Safety Coalition**  
**Senior Driver Safety and Mobility Options Community Forum**  
**Mountain Area Resource Center ( MARC)**  
**81 Elmwood Way**  
**Waynesville, NC 28786-5829**  
**August 24, 2006**  
**9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.**  
**AGENDA**

<b>TIME</b>	<b>TOPICS</b>	<b>PRESENTERS</b>
9:00 a.m.	Welcome from the NC Senior Driver Safety Coalition and Introductions	Suzanne LaFollette-Black, NC AARP, Associate State Director
	The Safety of NC Older Road Users	Dr. Jane Stutts, NC Highway Safety Research Center and Senior Driver Safety Coalition Chair
10:15-10:30	BREAK	
10:30-11:05	Evaluating a Community's Mobility Options	Audrey Straight, AARP Mobility Consultant
11:05-11:40	Evaluating a Community's Drivability	Sarah Davis, AAA of the Carolinas
11:40-12:15	Evaluating a Community's Walkability	Suzanne LaFollette-Black, NC AARP, and Dr. Jane Stutts, UNC HSRC
12:15-1:00	LUNCH	<b>Mobility, Drivability, Walkability-breakout groups</b>
1:00 -1:45	NC DMV Driver Medical Evaluation Program	Susan Stewart, Sherry Creech, Nadine Barnes, Tracy Bucholtz NC Division of Motor Vehicles, Driver Medical Evaluation Program
1:45-2:00	BREAK	
2:00-2:45	Community Resources Toolkit	All Session Facilitators
2:45-3:00	Questions/comments	Audience/Session Facilitators
3:00 p.m.	Adjourn	