



Watch for Me NC Triangle Pilot Campaign Summary

Introduction

The Triangle-wide Watch for Me NC pilot campaign was carried out in years 2012 and 2013 with staffing and funds from the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) and the Highway Safety Research Center (HSRC).

The Watch for Me NC program involves two key strategies:

- 1) High-visibility enforcement of pedestrian, bicycle, and motorist laws; and
- 2) Dissemination of safety messages through various outreach and education strategies.

Both approaches rely heavily on coordinated communication between partners as well as the public.

A – Campaign Partners

Partner municipalities included the Cities of Durham and Raleigh, the Towns of Apex, Chapel Hill, Carrboro, Cary, Fuqua-Varina, Knightdale, Morrisville and Wake Forest. University partners included Duke, Durham Tech, NC Central University, NC State, St. Augustine's, University of North Carolina and William Peace University. The Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and the Durham Chapel Hill MPO also served as partners in the campaign.

B – Campaign Season

The Triangle-wide campaign was launched in early August each year, with law enforcement activities particularly enhanced in October. This season was selected as the time when recurring campaigns would occur, as this timeframe allowed for the capture of attention of the students returning to school and universities. In addition, this period is shown to have the highest rates of pedestrian crashes.

C – Goals

The campaign, which targeted drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists, had the following goals:

- /// Gain recognition of the pedestrian and bicycle safety message in the NC Triangle area.
- /// Increase motorist awareness and understanding of pedestrian and bicycle issues.

/// Change motorist, pedestrian, and bicyclist behavior in the Triangle area to reduce the incidence of pedestrian and bicycle injuries and deaths.

/// Create a program to decrease pedestrian and bicycle injuries/deaths that can be easily replicated by other localities across the State.

D – Strategy

The campaign employed numerous strategies to target behaviors such as driver yielding to pedestrians, driver awareness/accommodation of bicyclists, and education for pedestrian and bicyclists on safe traveling practices.

Below is a listing of the campaign items employed to further the goal of improving pedestrian and bicycle safety, as part of the campaign effort.

/// Pedestrian and bicycle crash analysis

/// Outreach strategy

/// Print: posters, information cards, bumper stickers and vinyl banners

/// Communications: website, press releases, social media, press conferences, kick-off events

/// Collateral items: bicycle lights, reflective bracelets

/// Media: radio, transit and gas station signage

/// Police Involvement

/// Evaluation of campaign effectiveness

These items are described below in further detail.

E – Crash Data

The first task undertaken for the Triangle-wide campaign was to develop a detailed pedestrian and bicycle crash analysis. The crash analysis was useful in four important ways.

First, the analysis helped to highlight the magnitude of the pedestrian and bicycle safety issue, which was useful in securing the support of campaign partners, from municipalities, to police, universities and MPOs.



Second, the analysis, which provided the specific crash type for each incident – for example “failure to yield to pedestrian,” or “pedestrian dart-out” – served to inform the critical messages to be relayed to the public. Messages, both textual and graphic, were selected to address the most prevalent crash types.

Third, as the analysis illustrated where the highest numbers of crashes have occurred in recent years, it was useful in guiding the enforcement activities. In many cases, officers selected the intersections with the highest numbers of crashes for conducting enforcement.

Fourth, the crash analysis alerted agency planners and engineers to the high crash intersections and the most prevalent crash types at these locations. This information provided an opportunity for planners and engineers to identify safety issues and consider how engineering countermeasures could be applied to improve the overall safety of a given intersection or corridor.

F – Campaign Messaging

Campaign messaging was carried out using various formats and mechanisms, including print, communications and news efforts, distribution of collateral items, and media purchases, as described below.

Print

Print materials were developed for dissemination by local partners, who were responsible for delivering these materials to various outlets, including libraries, schools, universities, citizen neighborhood committees, advocacy groups, retail stores, and others.

Posters Posters were provided with information on bicycle and pedestrian behaviors and safety issues, in both English and Spanish.

Information cards Two-sided cards with laws and safety tips, printed in both in English and Spanish, were distributed by police upon issuing warnings or citations to drivers for infractions of pedestrian or bicycle laws, in addition

Bumper stickers Bumper sticker designs geared toward the driver. Two messages were used: “I break for people;” and “I watch for cyclists.



Vinyl banners Banners employing the same design as was used for the external transit advertising were strung in governmental buildings.



Communications

Communications efforts for the campaign included news coverage on TV, radio and print. In addition, the communications effort involved an intensive social media effort, a campaign website, ongoing contact with the media and dissemination of releases, a campaign kick-off event, and a video describing the campaign, posted to NCDOT’s website. See: www.watchformenc.org



The website contains information on the statewide Watch for Me NC campaign effort, as well as the various campaign graphics, radio spots, news coverage, and other items.

Special Events

The Triangle campaign made use of special events to highlight the campaign and gain the attention of the media.

A press conference was held at the end of the 2012 campaign, featuring the Administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, as well as police crosswalk enforcement operations at a location adjacent to following the press event – an opportunity for press coverage.



For the 2013 campaign, a bicycle ride kicked off the campaign, with a total of over a hundred riders supporting the effort.

Collateral Items

Collateral items - including bicycle lights and reflective bracelets - were given to police officers to distribute to their communities. Police officers were asked to distribute these items in various situations which might be considered “learning moments” for either pedestrians or bicyclists.

Bicycle lights Front and rear bicycle lights were provided, with batteries. The front lights, which are black, feature white flashers, while the back lights, which are red, feature red flashers.



Reflective bracelets The bracelets, with flashing white lights and silver reflective material, allow for improved visibility of pedestrians and cyclists.



Media Acquisition

Media, including radio, transit advertising and gas station advertising, brought the campaign safety message to a wide audience.

Radio Two radio spots – one focused upon bicycle and the other upon pedestrian safety – were run on Triangle-area on stations. The spots were 15 seconds in length. An effort was made to obtain radio space representing a broad demographic representative of drivers involved in pedestrian- or bicycle-vehicle collisions.

Transit

External - Two exterior transit bus ads were created to appear on the backs of buses (bus backs) to reach the driver audience. One of these was focused upon pedestrian safety, and the other upon bicycle safety.



Internal - Posters were placed inside buses to reach the transit rider audience. Posters measured 11 X 17 for most buses, and relayed both pedestrian and bicycle messages.

Gas Station Signage Posters with safety tips for drivers were placed at gas stations, with fillboards placed on gas pump handles and “clings” in gas station windows around the Triangle. These items were placed at stations which were in the vicinity of locations featuring high numbers of pedestrian- or bicycle -vehicle crashes.



G – Police Involvement

Involvement of police in the Watch for Me NC was a critical component to the overall impact of the campaign. Triangle-area police officers enforced pedestrian and bicycle laws during campaign months, following a two-day training course.

Police enforcement Police enforcement as part of the campaign is focus upon addressing the behaviors of drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists. Police targeted driver infraction of pedestrian crosswalk laws by issuing warnings, citations, or providing informational materials and verbal explanation of the crosswalk laws to drivers. In many cases, sandwich boards announcing the enforcement activities were placed in locations where enforcement operations were conducted.



Police Enforcement Training A two-day workshop was offered to members of law enforcement agencies and university police interested in participating in the enforcement efforts as part of the campaign.



The course provided law enforcement officers with the special traffic management knowledge and skills they needed to improve pedestrian and bicyclist safety in their communities. Peter Flucke, a nationally recognized pedestrian and bicyclist safety expert and former law enforcement officer, presented the latest pedestrian and bicyclist safety enforcement information.

The course included hands-on, in-the-field training on how to conduct a pedestrian crosswalk enforcement operation, as well as bicycle safety demonstrations. Attendees were requested to bring a helmet and a bicycle in good working condition.

Police in the news The majority of the news coverage of the Triangle campaign focused upon police enforcement of pedestrian and bicycle laws. Television and print news media attended the officer training course and conducted interviews with participants, and took photos and footage for their stories. In addition, the media focused attention upon law enforcement efforts to enforce crosswalk laws at specific locations. Press releases were issued to generate coverage of these events.

H - Evaluation

To evaluate the campaign's effectiveness, researchers from the Highway Safety Research Center carried out an evaluation, focusing on three aspects of the campaign:

- Administrative measures (tracking project activities, expenditures, materials, staff time)
- Direct behavioral measures (yielding behavior, pedestrian crossing behaviors, and several bicyclist behaviors)
- Self-reported measures (measures of law enforcement attitudes, knowledge, and sense of capacity before and after the training workshop was provided).

For the behavioral measures portion of the evaluation, data were collected at sites around the Triangle during weekdays, daylight hours, and dry weather conditions. Data was collected

before, during, and after the campaign to measure changes in behaviors. A report illustrating the evaluation findings was produced and will be made available in the next calendar year, to allow time for analysis of the data.

I – OBX Spin-off Campaign

A spin-off campaign launched in 2013 in the Outer Banks region offers a good example of a local effort to implement the Watch for Me NC campaign. In 2012, a group of concerned citizens and business owners in the Outer Banks region (OBX) banded together to start a pedestrian and bicycle campaign for their region. The OBX features a very high number of pedestrian and bicycle crashes relative to the rest of the state, in part due to the high number of tourists and foreign student workers visiting the region, who are walking and biking, whether for transportation or recreation.

In order to address this safety issue of public concern, the partners in the OBX partnered with NCDOT to develop a campaign similar to the Triangle pilot. The OBX campaign made use of print materials provided by NCDOT, and also developed their own educational video, to be shown to employees of Food Lion and other businesses.

Conclusion

The Triangle-wide Watch for Me NC pilot campaign has created a solid foundation for the development of a statewide campaign effort. The campaign made use of numerous innovative education and enforcement strategies, which the local campaigns may draw upon for ideas of how to carry out their own program.

The Outer Banks spin-off campaign is a good example of a first local campaign effort, as it was carried out with the support and involvement of citizens, business leaders and governmental staff. It is expected that many more such localized effort will be launched as part of the statewide 2014 campaign.