

**Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS) Advisory Committee**

April 28th, 2026

10:00-11:00 AM

Remotely via Microsoft Teams

**Meeting Minutes**

**I. Call to Order, Roll Call**

Chair Kathleen Rooney called the meeting to order at 3:02 PM and conducted a roll call of committee members and confirmed a quorum was present.

Member requirement	Appointment detail(s)	Name	Present?
One member to be appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives	House of Representatives appointee	Kathleen Rooney	Y
One member to be appointed by the president of the senate	Senate appointee, chair for 2025-2026	Malia Bokanski, designee for Abbey Seitz	Y
The department of transportation's safe routes to school program coordinator		Po Unutoa, temporary designee	Y
The deputy director of the department of transportation's highways division		Larry Dill, designee for Robin Shishido	Y
One member representing the physical activity and nutrition section of the department of health's chronic disease prevention and health promotion division		Heidi Hansen-Smith, official designee	Y
The superintendent of education		Audrey Hidano, official designee	N
The co-chair of the Hawaii climate change mitigation and adaptation commission	Chairperson, Department of Land and Natural Resources	Luke Sarvis, official designee	Y
The co-chair of the Hawaii climate change mitigation and adaptation commission	Director, Office of Planning and Sustainable Development	Leah Laramee, official designee	Y
One member representing the Hawaii state energy office		Shana Merrifield for Chris Yunker, official designee	Y
One member representing the Hawaii state council on developmental disabilities		Sierra Whiteside	N
One member representing each county agency with jurisdiction over transportation	City and County of Honolulu	Yamato Sasaki, official designee	Y
	County of Hawaii	Jesse Domian, official designee	Y
	County of Kauai	Keith Hatcher, official designee	Y

	County of Maui	Kurt Watanabe, official designee	Y
One member representing an organization with a focus on bicycling	Appointed by the governor, pursuant to section 26-34, for a three-year term	Thomas Noyes	Y
One member representing an organization with a focus on senior citizens and their families	Appointed by the governor, pursuant to section 26-34, for a three-year term	James Burke	Y
One member representing an organization that understands the ways families with young children navigate through the State	Appointed by the governor, pursuant to section 26-34, for a three-year term	Pending	N
One member representing an organization with a focus on public health and mobility	Appointed by the governor, pursuant to section 26-34, for a three-year term	Jessica Thompson	N
One member representing an organization with a focus on transportation equity and mobility	Appointed by the governor, pursuant to section 26-34, for a three-year term	Jeanne Torres	N
The chair of the senate standing committee with primary jurisdiction over transportation	Senate, serving as non-voting, ex-officio member	Senator Lorraine Inoye	N
The chair of representatives standing committee with primary jurisdiction over transportation	House of Representatives, serving as non-voting, ex-officio member	Akaumu for Representative Darius Kila	Y

Identified Guests – Kevin Richardson and Jose Vega (Attorney General’s Office); Leigh Ann Lopex and Patti Hatzistavrakis (Hawai‘i Public Health Institute); Jashwant Tej Kasala (Global Designing Cities Initiative); Eduardo Hernandez (Hawaii Bicycling League); Amy Ford-Wagner (Federal Highway Administration); Mel Chung (Hawai‘i Department of Transportation); Justin Menina (Hawai‘i Department of Health); Abbey Setiz (Hawaii Appleseed); and Bev Brody (Get Fit Kaua‘i)

**II. Old Business**

- a. Action to approve draft meeting minutes – The Committee voted to approve the January 27<sup>th</sup>, 20206 and the February 24, 2026 meeting minutes unanimously.
- b. Action to approve, in part, the Hawai‘i Department of Transportation (HDOT) funding request for the SRTS Coordinator.

Larry Dill of Hawaii DOT announced that the Tara Lucas will no longer be the HDOT Safe Routes to School coordinator and that Po will be covering her responsibilities in the interim while HDOT seeks a more permanent reassignment to the SRTS Advisory Committee role. Through the HDOT Safe Routes to Schools email address, Po will be the primary point of contact for the county coordinators and any other related business, including active work on intergovernmental agreements, etc. HDOT will provide a more complete status update at the May meeting.

In response to final requests from HDOT and additional clarifications regarding specific responsibilities regarding minutes, the Committee approved the amended action as underlined here unanimously:

“Action to approve, *in part*, the Hawai‘i Department of Transportation (HDOT) [funding request](#) dated October 6th, 2025, (see [additional details](#) provided on November 3, 2025). The Committee approves the dispersal Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Special Fund monies to cover costs for the HDOT SRTS Coordinator and other HDOT staff related to the SRTS program, not to exceed \$500,000 from FY 2025–26 to FY 2028–29. Approval of funding shall be on a conditional basis, subject to terms outlined in the agenda and suggested changes here underlined:

- i. Monthly Reporting. The HDOT SRTS Coordinator shall provide verbal monthly meeting updates to the SRTS Advisory Committee on program activities and use of Special Fund monies. These updates shall include relevant activities identified in the HDOT SRTS Coordinator scope of work, including but not limited to participation in walk audits, development of SRTS plans on state-owned facilities, and assistance provided to counties and communities.
- ii. Legislative Report. HDOT will facilitate and coordinate the submission of the final report to Legislature in accordance with legislative deadlines and requirements, serving as a conduit between the consultant, counties and the Advisory Committee. At HDOT’s behest, the report shall be drafted by the consultant and provided to the SRTS Advisory Committee for review no fewer than thirty (30) days prior to the statutory transmittal deadline.
- iii. Committee Minutes. The HDOT SRTS Coordinator, in coordination with and support from other HDOT staff and consultants, will facilitate and coordinate the drafting and finalization of minutes for all monthly SRTS Advisory Committee meetings, once consultant is on board. Until this time, the Committee remains responsible for the drafting and finalizing of the minutes.
- iv. Undertaking Committee Actions. The HDOT SRTS Coordinator, in coordination with and support from other HDOT staff and consultants, shall take steps to ensure that actions approved by the SRTS Advisory Committee are undertaken within three (3) months of approval, unless otherwise directed by the Committee.

- v. Supplemental Use of Funds. As in line with Act 244 (2023), it is preferred that SRTS Special Fund monies may be used only if funds are unavailable or insufficient, and shall supplement, not supplant, other funding sources.
  
- c. Update on the SRTS Special Fund Status, including the collection and depositing of the \$5 registration fee (under Act 212).

With the change in HDOT staffing, Larry and Po from HDOT were only able to provide limited updates. The available cash balance in the fund was \$10,769,084 as of April 15, 2026. The planned allotments for Q3 and Q4 of 2025-2026 were not current. Chair Rooney inquired about the plan to ensure that funds were distributed while HDOT has the budget authority to spend funds. HDOT confirmed that it was planning to distribute the remaining approved funds by the end of the fiscal year and they will provide an update at the next meeting.

### III. New Business

#### a. Action to pre-approve registration fee requests from counties.

Chair Rooney presented a new item based on the last meeting’s discussion about the process to collect the new SRTS fund fee. To expedite the process, the Chair recommended that the Committee “preapprove” the county requests. The requests for this funding still need to be submitted by the county motor vehicle registration offices and still need to be submitted formally, but this can help HDOT move more quickly. HDOT agreed that with they can send a letter to the counties informing them of the Committee’s approval with the posting of the minutes. It was agreed that the Committee minutes, once posted, would serve as the official record and that HDOT would send out communications to counties as such.

The Committee approved the action as amended in underlined here:

The Committee recommends transferring up to \$80,000 (\$20,000 per county) for the four counties to update their department of motor vehicle systems to be able to charge and collect the \$5 SRTS vehicle registration fee. The counties must still submit written funding requests to the Advisory Committee when ready, but if under \$20,000, the committee recommends that HDOT transfer the amounts requested by counties to move forward as needed.

#### b. Plan and Program update

The Chair tabled this action until the May meeting due to time constraints.

#### c. Staff updates

Larry Dill of HDOT confirmed that they had seen the County of Hawaii’s letter for the county SRTS coordinator position funding moving through for approval and was scheduled to be sent out on 4/30/2026.

**d. Project update**

The Chair tabled this action until the May meeting due to time constraints.

**e. Update on relevant 2026 state legislative bills**

The Chair noted that SB 3234 was scheduled for conference committee, which would potentially allow Safe Routes to School funds to be used for pedestrian improvements more broadly outside of the Committee’s process and that funds could be diverted beginning around FY 2027 (or the following fiscal year). Other related bills are dead for this session.

**f. Upcoming speakers - None scheduled.**

**IV. Presentation: Designing Streets for Kids by Jashwanth Tej Kasala with the Global Designing Cities Initiative**

Jashwant Tej Kasala presented on their work on improving school streets in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. In Kuala Lumpur, many children’s trip to school is the most dangerous part of their day due to speeding, unsafe crossings, narrow sidewalks, and heavy vehicle-dominated traffic and 70 child deaths per year occur around school zones, usually due to speeding. Their approach uses crash data to select priority school sites. Then they co-design solutions with city engineers, school communities, and parents and children. City staff also build capacity around speed data collection, walking and biking counts, and desire line mapping.

At Dana Kota School Street, 80 percent of students live within walking or biking distance but only 25 percent do so and nearby speeds are high. Using engagement tools like children’s drawings, parent surveys, “reverse periscopes”, and other activities, they were allowed to try out new designs in different ways. They started with a pop-up test and the proposed interim treatments before moving to capital construction what included raised crossings, narrowed lanes, a protected bi-directional cycle track, and expanded pedestrian plaza and sidewalk areas, including shaded side walkways. They reclaimed approximately 1,365–1,400 m<sup>2</sup> of street space for pedestrians, reduced crossing distances by about 70 percent, and reduces speeds by ~35–40 percent. 80-90 percent of children liked the new design and reported feeling safer, which is backed up by the fact that more students and parents then walked and biked. As a result, the project led to national policy changes and subsequent projects at other schools.

**V. Open Forum: Invitation to interested members of the public to be heard on matters not included on the agenda – none.**

**IV. Announcements** – None.

**V. Adjournment at 4:08 PM**