

MEETING SUMMARY
REGIONAL SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Friday, October 23, 2020

The Regional Safety Advisory Committee met via Microsoft Teams at 10 am on October 23, 2020.

Members in Attendance

Alonzo Liñán, Chair, City of Keller; Asma Tuly, Co-Chair, City of Allen; Joe Acosta, Trinity Metro; Joe Atwood, Hood County; George Barnes, Dallas Area Rapid Transit; Rick Cortez, City of Mesquite; Caryl deVries, City of Grand Prairie; John Denholm, Lee Engineering; Ron Hartline, City of The Colony; Daniel Herrig, City of Richardson; Matt Hotelling, Town of Flower Mound; Gus Khankarli, City of Dallas; Rich Larkins, City of Grapevine; Minh Le, Texas Transportation Institute; Jim Lockart, City of Waxahachie; Brian Moen, City of Frisco; Yang Ouyang, North Texas Tollway Authority; Huma Patel, City of Garland; Mohammed Quadeer, TxDOT Fort Worth District; John Romberger, City of Carrollton; Gregory Royster, Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport; Rob Severance, City of Cleburne; Kevin St. Jacques, Hunt County; Anthony Smith, Dallas County; Jerod Stanley, TxDOT Dallas District; Matthew Tilke, City of Plano; Joe Trammel, Tarrant County.

Guests in Attendance

Rama Dhanikonda, City of Richardson; Larbi Hanni, TxDOT Austin; Curtis Hefner, Lee Engineering; Eric Hemphill, North Texas Tollway Authority; Jim Hollis, TxDOT; Dhruva Lahon, Kimley-Horn Assoc. Inc.; Heather Lott, TxDOT Austin; Elizabeth Reynolds, City of Grapevine; Lesley Trevino, TxDOT; George Villareal, TxDOT; Letty von Rossum, TxDOT Austin; Jason Wu, Texas Transportation Institute.

NCTCOG Staff in Attendance

Tom Bamonte, Natalie Bettger, Camille Fountain, Clinton Hail, Kevin Kroll, Sonya Landrum, Michael Misantonis, Ezra Pratt, Ricardo Serrano, Shannon Stevenson, Barbara Walsh.

Meeting Summary Outline

1. Approval of July 24, 2020 Meeting Summary
2. TxDOT Safety Plan and Performance Targets
3. COVID-19/Dallas District Overview
4. NTTA Wrong Way Driving Program Overview
5. Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan
6. Developing Low-Cost Countermeasures
7. Update Items
8. Safety-Related Reference Items, Topics or Training Courses
9. Upcoming Safety-Related Events and Training Announcements
10. Other Business
11. Next RSAC Meeting: January 22, 2021, 10 am

1. Approval of July 24, 2020 Meeting Summary – Alonzo Liñán, Chair, City of Keller

The July 24, 2020 meeting summary was accepted as written.

2. TxDOT’s Safety Plan and Performance Targets – Larbi Hanni, Heather Lott, Letty Rasmussen, TxDOT

Larbi Hanni, Letty Rasmussen and Heather Lott presented today on the Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP), the Highway Safety Plan (HSP), and the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP), respectively, and program performance targets.

The SHSP is the umbrella safety plan. It covers a lot of countermeasures from the HSIP, which is NHTSA-driven, and focuses more on the traffic safety of the equation in addition to the engineering piece. Performance measures chosen by stakeholders cover Distracted Driving; Impaired Driving; Roadway and Lane Departures; Speeding; Pedestrian Safety; Intersection Safety; and Older Users.

The HSP describes processes used to identify the State’s traffic safety challenges, establish performance measures, and propose a plan to reach its performance safety targets. HSP is federally funded by NHTSA. The focus is on education and enforcement. Plans are developed and submitted every year to NHTSA for approval. Some of the campaigns are Click it or Ticket; Be Safe. Drive Smart.; and Talk. Text. Crash.

The HSIP program focuses on the engineering aspect of safety. The budget is about \$300M each year, broken down to district targeted (50%), district systemic (25%), state systemic (15%), and district off-system (10%). The dollar amount in each category is based on the ratio of fatalities and progress. Heather presented the timeline for the FY 2022-2024 project selection. The 2020 Call for Projects is currently open, with submittals due October 30. The Traffic Operations Division (TRF) will review submittals and project selections will be confirmed by March 1, 2021.

Larbi went over the five performance measures the SHSP, HSP, and HSIP share. They include fatalities; fatality rate; serious injuries; serious injury rate; and number of non-motorized fatalities and non-motorized serious injuries. Targets are established on a 5-year linear trend. The zero fatalities target is set for 2050, with half of that projected to be met by 2035. Target dates were detailed in the presentation.

Letty went over the Traffic Safety Program Request for Proposals (RFP) FY2022 planning schedule. The RFP will be posted on November 6, 2020, with a proposal due date of January 6, 2021 and an award date of October 1, 2021.

The presentation can be found on NCTCOG’s website.

3. Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan – Joe Acosta, Trinity Metro

Joe introduced himself as the Chief Safety Officer for bus and rail. Trinity Metro reaches out to the MPO and State to see what performance targets can be referenced and made available; to establish an interface with the State and MPO relative to the planning processes and targets used; to see what performance targets can be referenced that include mass transit; and make the processes that they use available to the state.

4. COVID-19/Dallas District Overview – Minh Le, Texas Transportation Institute

Minh Le introduced Jason Wu who also worked on the analysis and was available for questions. Minh and Jason performed an extensive study of the impacts of COVID-19 on roadways in the TxDOT Dallas district.

Minh's presentation showed the safety impacts of COVID-19 by examining Traffic Management Center (TMC) incidents and Crash Records Information System data. 2020 TMC incidents generally decreased between March 23rd, when Dallas County implemented its Shelter in Place order, and August 16th as compared to the 2018/2019 average. The frequency of crashes in 2020 also decreased during that timeframe; both statewide (compared to 2017-2019 average) and in Dallas district (compared to 2019). This trend correlated well with the decreases in vehicle-mile-traveled (VMT) nationally and in Dallas district (as described later). Other Dallas district trends included increases in the fatal and the truck tractor crashes. The increase in truck tractor crashes is likely due to having more trucks in vehicle mix as truck tractor VMT not decreasing as significantly as passenger car VMT coupled with truck tractor VMT recovering faster. Except for a week in September, the truck tractor VMT has consistently exceeded pre-COVID levels since July. Researchers hypothesize that the increased fatal crashes are due to motorists increasing their operating speeds (which results in more severe injury crashes). This is likely occurring because there is less congestion with the decrease in overall VMT. TxDOT Dallas requested further study to prove the hypothesis with additional data sources.

The traffic volumes and speed data (in terms of travel time) from representative ITS detectors were also examined. Sample graphs showed daily volumes generally decreased 20%-50% in March/April 2020 but was only 5%-10% less in August as compared to 2018. The daily travel time along five different commuting routes were also analyzed and discussed as compared to 2018. TTI is also developing districtwide volume and travel time measures as well as corresponding dashboards.

Other modes of travel were also studied, such as bicycle and pedestrian. This information came from NCTCOG's 2019 pedestrian and bicycle count data. There was a 42%-221% increase in pedestrian and bicycle volumes at the four locations studied although most of the increase may likely be related to recreational and not commuting purposes. Average weekday transit ridership by month showed significant decreases (43%-79%) according to data from DART's light rail and buses, Trinity Railway Express, and Denton County Transportation Authority and Trinity Metro's bus systems.

The presentation can be found on NCTCOG's website.

5. NTTA Wrong Way Driving Program Overview – Eric Hemphill, North Texas Tollway Authority

Eric Hemphill introduced himself as the Director of Traffic Incident Management at the North Texas Tollway Authority (NTTA). Eric summarized 11 years of wrong way driving (WWD) prevention and detection efforts. The WWD task force began in 2009. Members in the task force include staff from engineering, maintenance, government affairs, public information officer, and the IT group.

Wrong way driving is a small percentage of overall crashes but have a higher rate of serious or fatal numbers when they do happen. Effective countermeasures implemented by NTTA

were improved signage, including the design of a wrong way sign at the two-foot level, which achieved a 50% reduction in incidents at those locations; layout and lane markings that help diminish drivers mistaking an exit ramp for an entrance ramp; Loop Detection already installed in the roadways that counts axles could also identify a wrong way driver; loop-activated signs on main lanes, displaying a warning when a vehicle makes a U-turn on the main lanes; thermal cameras at 21 locations on the system; and connected signs.

Working in partnership with TTI, NTTA will help advance a project on connected vehicles. When a smart car detects a wrong way driver, that information can be sent out to other smart cars in the area.

The presentation can be found on NCTCOG's website.

6. Developing Low-Cost Countermeasures – Dhruva Lahon, Kimley-Horn

Dhruva Lahon presented low-cost safety countermeasures Kimley-Horn developed for different agencies and municipalities, as well as TxDOT districts around the state. She detailed how Kimley-Horn incorporated the historical way of doing safety analyses, how the new safe system approach was implemented, and how this was incorporated as countermeasures for different elements were developed. Five elements were covered – traffic signals, pavement markings, curves, pedestrians, technology.

As part of the crash analyses, the traditional method is to identify target facilities/hot spots for crashes using heat maps. They look at crash contributing factors and evaluate predominant crash trends to determine countermeasures for treatment. The safe system approach incorporates managing interactions of roadway, vehicles, multi-modes, and travel speeds. It promotes a system-wide safety strategy, design of forgiving roadways, and accommodates human error.

Dhruva described the safe system approach for each of the five elements listed above, the low-cost countermeasures deployed, and the impact the countermeasures made in decreasing the historical number of crashes per element.

The presentation can be found on NCTCOG's website.

7. Update Items

- a) 2021 Federal Safety Targets Development Activities – Kevin Kroll, NCTCOG
- b) Mobility Assistance Patrol Peer Review – Kevin Kroll, NCTCOG
- c) CVE Equipment and Training Program Update – Kevin Kroll, NCTCOG
- d) Commercial Motor Vehicle Violations: Enforcement, Prosecution, and Reporting Training Update – Michael Misantonis, NCTCOG
- e) Traffic Incident Management Training During COVID-19 – Camille Fountain, NCTCOG
- f) Traffic Incident Regional Police Academy Outreach – Camille Fountain, NCTCOG
- g) Traffic Incident Management 2020 Self-Assessment Survey Activities – Camille Fountain, NCTCOG
- h) Traffic Incident Management Call for Projects Status Update – Camille Fountain, NCTCOG

- i) National Traffic Incident Response Awareness Week – Sonya Landrum, NCTCOG
- j) Transportation Related Regional Conferences/Trainings – Ricardo Serrano, NCTCOG

8. [Safety Related Reference Items, Topics or Training Courses Website](#)

9. Upcoming Safety-Related Events and Training Announcements

- a) Fall 2020 “Virtual: Traffic Incident Management Executive Level Course
 - o November 5, 2020
- b) [National Traffic Incident Response Awareness Week](#)
 - o November 9 – 16, 2020
- c) National Traffic Incident Management Train-the-Trainer Workshop (Virtual)
 - o November 12 – 13, 2020

10. Other Business

There was no other business.

11. Next Regional Safety Advisory Committee Meeting

The next RSAC is scheduled for January 22, 2021 and will be held virtually.

Chair Liñán concluded the meeting.