

Advisory Council on Traffic Safety

Final Minutes

Wednesday, February 14, 2024

1:00 – 4:00pm

Humphrey School of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota
301 S 19th Ave, Minneapolis, MN 55455
Josie Johnson Community Room (Room 180)

Attendees

Appendix A lists all Council members, staff, and invited guests who were present at the meeting.

Call to Order

Chair Hanson called the meeting to order at 1:03 p.m.

Welcome and Introductions

Chairs' Welcome and Introductions

Chair Hanson welcomed members. All members, invited guests, and staff introduced themselves and the organization they were representing on the Council. Non-members were not introduced due to time constraints.

Approve Today's Agenda

Wojcik made a motion to approve the agenda with no changes, Moilanen seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Approve Minutes from December 13 Meeting

Wojcik made a motion to approve the December 13, 2023 meeting minutes with no changes. Ramos seconded the motion. Motion carried.

The final meeting minutes are available on the [December meeting webpage](#).

Foundations of the Safe System Approach

Vice Chair Sorenson highlighted the importance of the Safe System approach as a pillar to our safety work and a guiding principle in TZD 2.0.

Overview of the Safe System Approach Presentation

Ken Johnson, MnDOT, Assistant State Traffic Engineer, highlighted the TZD program's commitment to safety which is clearly identified in the Minnesota Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP), as well as in MnDOT's Vision, Mission, and 5-year Strategic Plan. In an effort to meet the goals set in the SHSP, MnDOT set road safety performance measures—many of which have not been met. Continuing to do the same things will not lead us to zero deaths. The Minnesota SHSP has a goal of no more than 225 traffic deaths and no more than 980 serious injuries by 2025, but current trends are suggesting this is

not attainable. The Safe System Approach is being adopted in Minnesota to help meet these goals and continue our efforts to reduce the number of fatal and serious injury crashes.

The Safe System approach begins by acknowledging 2 key points:

1. People make mistakes
2. Humans are fragile

Roads in a Safe System are designed to accommodate known human limitations and expected behavior. People are held accountable for reasonable behavior, but normal human lapses in judgment or diligence are expected and roads are configured so that such errors do not lead to death or serious injury. Even with a forgiving design, crashes will occur in a Safe System, so roads are designed to limit crash forces to survivable levels.

The Safe System approach is not a new concept. It has existed for more than 30 years in countries across the globe. Adopters of the Safe System approach (for example Norway, France, Sweden, etc.) have seen marked decreases in traffic fatalities across their roadway systems—with many achieving much greater reductions in traffic fatalities than the US over the previous 20 years. The Safe System approach is how these countries moved off the “plateau” of safety to start achieving significant reductions.

The Safe System Approach includes six principles and five elements, as shown in this graphic from the Federal Highway Administration.



Johnson walked through the principles and elements, highlighting current and past solutions that have been implemented. Examples included District Safety Plans, County Road Safety Plans, rumble, roundabouts, J-turns, enhanced edge lines, road safety audits, TZD partnerships, and federal safety funding.

Slides from the presentation are available in the [February meeting presentation slides](#).

Member Discussion

Vice Chair Sorenson led the member discussion. Members were asked to share their thoughts and reactions to Mr. Johnson’s presentation. Discussion centered on the following questions.

- What challenges exist when you think about the Safe System approach? Member discussion included:
 - Can be challenging to explore options that are not design standards (for example, design speed leading to larger roundabouts, but then not as much ability to calm traffic)
 - Crash data doesn't collect "why" people do what they do and that could be helpful
 - Funding is a challenge
 - Dimler law causes issues/changes behavior negatively to potentially encourage speeding
 - Pedestrian fatalities are over represented in Minnesota
 - Designing roads with lower speeds similar to Norway

- How should the Council incorporate Safe System into their work/structure?
 - Choose the most impactful components of Safe System and implement them first
 - Use the annual report to the legislature as the ACTS voice, include actions and recommendations from this Council
 - Incentivize vs punish (one example is to have a reduction in insurance premiums if you utilize speed governors) to change behavior
 - Elevate safety standards—and then require justification for why a project is not meeting those standards
 - From a judicial perspective, consider penalties that will be impactful to each individual person to motivate them to not reoffend. For example, one person may be motivated to change behavior if you take away their license, another if they receive a fine, and another if they can keep the violation off their record for insurance reasons.
 - We should also look at ATV/UTV safety.

Working Group Updates

Vice Chair Sorenson introduced Derek Leuer, MnDOT's State Traffic Safety Engineer. Mr. Leuer gave updates from the working groups.

Strategic Highway Safety Plan Working Group

The group met on February 9th and discussed SHSP and potential recommendations to ACTS.

Rural High Risk Roadways/Safe Road Zones Working Group

- Rural High Risk Roadways
 - They have met as a group three times. They reviewed legislation, intent, constraints, and goals. They focused on setting "program purpose" and how to achieve that and developed the Rural High Risk Roadways Program and Solicitation.
 - There is \$10 million ready for safety projects on Minnesota trunk highways for the goal to reduce speed and conflicts on rural highways. The funding must be spent on Minnesota trunk highways and "let" by June 30, 2026. It must be in areas outside of municipal boundaries of 5,000 people or more and potential projects include roundabouts, J-turns, horizontal curve delineation, dynamic speed feedback signs in transition zones, curb extensions, median refuge islands, trails/sidewalks, bike lanes. The solicitation is expected to be February 14 – March 29, 2024. Local agencies and MnDOT will be eligible to apply for funding. Volunteers will score the solicitations.
 - The Council approved moving forward with the solicitation.

- Safe Road Zones
 - Solicitation for Safe Road Zones is in development. Local agencies and MnDOT can apply for funding. There is \$1 million for establishment of safe road zones and \$1 million for

added enforcement. The funding can be used for studies, infrastructure, education, social media campaigns, etc.

Traffic Safety Data Requests

Vice Chair Diamond described the new “Multi-Agency Data Response Team” that was developed to address the various data requests made by Council members. If members have data-related questions they should reach out to Council Chairs or staff via email. Council leadership will coordinate with the data response team.

Data Response Team members include:

- Brian Harmon, Office of Traffic Safety, Minnesota Department of Public Safety
- Derek Leuer, Office of Traffic Engineering, Minnesota Department of Transportation
- Angela Seley, Office of Traffic Safety, Minnesota Department of Public Safety
- Erik Zabel, Injury and Violence Prevention, Minnesota Department of Health

The first task for the Data Response Team was to review and summarize responses to the three questions that were asked of Council members in December.

- What data would be helpful for you and for this committee?
- How do we best use data to prioritize our efforts to most effectively reduce the greatest number of life changing crashes?
- How would you like to use the Data Analytics Center provided for in the 2023 Legislative Session?

Vice Chair Diamond reported on behalf of the team. After a review of responses, the data team sorted the ideas by data availability and project complexity.

- Data Availability
 - Easy: Already have data in formats we are accustomed to analyzing
 - Moderate: Data available in some form, but has yet to be obtained or put into analyzable format. This includes instances of existing databases maintained by different agencies that have never been or are not routinely combined. The new Data Analytics Center may assist with some of these combinations.
 - Hard: Data either not currently available, or would require substantial resources to collect or obtain. Includes commercial data sets and instances where manual review of information might be required to collect data.
- Project Complexity
 - Simple: Involves questions we’re already asking or situations we’re already monitoring.
 - Moderate: Involves questions we may not have fully addressed before (or only touched on briefly), but have given some thought or are not too far away from current efforts. Would require some time to complete, but could probably fit into existing staffing and budgetary constraints.
 - Difficult: Involves questions well outside current work processes, and would require new research efforts and additional resources to address adequately.

They then put project ideas into the following matrix.

Data Availability

Project Complexity	Easy	Moderate	Hard
Simple	Vulnerable Road User Crash Seasonality Historical Data for VRUs Urban Travel Speed vs. Design Speed Risk Factor ID	Drug Prevalence & Concentration School Zone Crashes Citation Data Analyses Work Zone Speed Analysis	"Suspected" Distracted Driving Racial Data on Non-Fatal Crashes
Moderate	In-Depth Contributing Factors Analyses Risk Factors by Age, Gender, VMT Intersection Info on K/A Crashes Pedestrian Death Analysis	Crashes by Uneducated Drivers Vehicle Weight in Crashes Variations in Road Engineering Near Schools Effects of Intersection Design DL Records & Crash Records Comparison	Cell Phone Location/Speed Near-Miss Tracking Private Industry Safety Comparisons
Difficult		Design Speed Effect on Investment Design Speed Effect on Public Health Health data on substance use and crashes	Non-Insured Motorists Misuse of Auto Assist Systems International Comparison of Traffic Death Rates Effects of Automobile Dependency

Next Steps

The data response team proposed to have a short "data dive" added to the agenda of each upcoming Council meeting so they can update ACTS members on the topics about which we are most data literate. Potential topics include:

- Pedestrian Death Analysis
- Urban travel speed versus design and posted speed
- Focus data dives on top policy issues to determine if there is validity to the policy being recommended based on Minnesota data
- Overlay weather patterns with crashes
- Use the top contributing factors as buckets

In addition, members noted the interest to discuss the data, not just see the data. For example, what can be done, what should the Council recommend, etc. There is also a possibility to consider turning some of these ideas into National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP), MnDOT, or Local Road Research Board (LRRB) project and needs statements.

Member Discussion: Near-Term Projects and Ideas

Vice Chair Diamond introduced Paul Aasen, Minnesota Safety Council. Mr. Aasen introduced the discussion regarding near-term traffic safety projects and/or ideas. He mentioned that we want to build momentum, energy, and short-term wins as we work toward our long-term goals.

Chair Hanson gave a challenge to all members: identify one idea/project we can do right now.

The following were the ideas submitted to the question: What's one thing that you wish we'd do (or be doing) right now to improve traffic safety? If we are serious about _____, then we will _____.

Ideas:

- Striping wider, brighter, more durable on roadways
- Seatbelt campaign
- Rebuild trust in law enforcement
- Need law enforcement and judicial system to enforce existing laws
- Support speed safety cameras

- Operation Lights On expansion/support program where law enforcement officers see a head light out, etc. instead of giving a ticket, give a voucher for the repair to take place
- Build relationships between law enforcement and high school students. For example, seat belt incentive projects at high schools where law enforcement give ice cream coupons for students wearing seat belts as they leave school parking lot
- Expanding pedestrian head starts or leading pedestrian intervals at busy pedestrian intersections, giving pedestrians a 3-7 second head start to cross the street. Similar ideas can be done for cyclists, with bike leading intervals.
- Hire extra resources to go through data, prioritize where we get bang for our buck—create a plan to guide projects
- Turn undivided 4 way roadways into 3 lane, center turn
- Eliminate left turns at high conflict pedestrian areas
- Mini traffic circles at busy intersections
- Opportunities/resources in rural Minnesota for programs such as JoyRide
- Revisit a helmet law, including ATVs, etc. Chair Hanson noted this as a legislative activity.
- Broad deployment of longitudinal rumbles on high-speed roads
- Require agency vehicles to follow speed limits
- Agencies only purchase vehicles with emergency braking and other safety systems
- Where do we prioritize safety at a statewide and agency level? If safety is one of our top priorities, ensure top line metrics/decisions support that priority
- Pilot program: photo education program and possibly pair it with Safe Road Zones
- Revisiting current SHSP. Were we effective or were we busy?
- Develop adult education (gap between drivers education and 55+) program. We can figure out how to get people to take it later, but develop program now. Look at the People Friendly Driver Program through the Bicycle Alliance as an example.
 - Could be an option for those who cannot afford driver's education class a way to get the training. Maybe the kids and or parents are involved in an outreach project.
 - Continued drivers education would help those experienced drivers that tend to acquire experienced driver bad habits.
 - Do not forget to consider disparities if programs require participants to give money, time
- Geo fence scooters. OEM, software developers would need to be involved. In regional city centers autos would respond to these geo fences to control vehicle speed.
- Messaging around impaired driving and cannabis, including edibles.
- Require continued drivers education at different ages. This would require legislative discussion
- Prescription drug impairment. The BCA's ability to do a full screen is limited so we don't have a good grasp on full/multi impairment data. Do we know what prescription drugs cause impairment? Can we develop a self-test to determine if you are impaired? Are there cognitive tests that currently exist?
 - Need to consider more than just prescription drugs - consider herbals that are just as potent
 - There is a cognitive screening test that has been distributed to law enforcement across the state, often associated with older drivers, but is actually intended for ALL ages not just cars, but bikes, and peds as well (DOSCI)
- Distracted driving. Auto turn off cell phones while driving?
- Another idea to suggest for potential projects: create a "Toward Zero Deaths" network throughout the state, where cities/counties can publicly acknowledge their commitment to preventing crashes. Resources could be created and shared through the network, proven strategies, guidance on the Safe System approach, etc. A way to expand our work to make it

roadway safety a priority. Also, creating roadway safety ambassadors within these cities/counties to spread the messages throughout the community.

The Executive Committee will discuss next steps at their March meeting and circle back to Council Members with a proposed plan to move forward.

Public Comment

Chair Hanson asked if there were any comments from the public. Guest Erik Zabel asked if ACTS will be looking at reducing the number of miles driven by providing and/or improving alternative modes such as mass transit. Vice Chair Sorenson responded that MnDOT is focusing on reducing vehicle miles driving by providing various systems and developing tools to identify locations where people would walk if they could. MnDOT and other agencies will continue to work on this effort.

Adjourn

Chair Hanson thanked everyone for their time, attention, and involvement in traffic safety. Wojcik made a motion to adjourn, Leuer seconded the motion. Motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 3:56 p.m.

The next Advisory Council on Traffic Safety meeting will be April 10, 2024 from 1:00-4:00pm in the Josie Johnson Community Room at the Humphrey School of Public Affairs on the University of Minnesota campus.

Appendix A: Attendance: Members, Staff, and Invited Guests

Member Name	Organization	Present		Not Present
		In-person	Virtual	
<i>Council Members</i>				
Aasen, Paul	Minnesota Safety Council		X	
Ali-Mumin, Abdirahman	Representing Vulnerable Road Users			X
Cocking, Aaron	Insurance Federation of Minnesota			X
Crego, Chelaine	Northstar Bus Lines (representing Minnesota Association for Pupil Transportation)			X
Cummings, Sheryl	Minnesota Operation Lifesaver		X	
Diamond, Catherine	Minnesota Department of Health, Injury and Violence Prevention Section	X		
Hanson, Mike	Minnesota Department of Public Safety, Office of Traffic Safety	X		
Hartzell, Chris	City of Woodbury (representing League of Minnesota Cities)	X		
Hausladen, John	Minnesota Trucking Association			X
Hernandez, Kristine	Statewide TZD Program Coordinator	X		
Hosmer, Pete	A+ Driving School (representing Minnesota Driver and Traffic Safety Education Association)	X		
Jacobs, Robert	CentraCare (representing Minnesota Statewide Trauma Advisory Council)	X		
Jeppson, Julie	Anoka County (representing Association of Minnesota Counties)		X	
Kosluchar, Jim	City of Fridley (representing City Engineers Association of Minnesota)			X
LaDoucer, Gene	AAA	X		
Langer, Matt	Minnesota State Patrol, Chief			X
Larson, Annette	TZD Regional Coordinator			X
Leidle, Reed	Safety Signs (representing contractors)	X		
Leuer, Derek	Minnesota Department of Transportation, State Traffic Safety Engineer	X		

Meyer, Kerry	American Bar Association, State Judicial Outreach Liaison	X		
Moilanen, Michael	Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe (representing tribal governments)	X		
Ostgaard, Gayra	Minnesota Department of Education		X	
Putzke, Becky	Law Enforcement Liaison	X		
Quinn, Cheryl	Representing Vulnerable Road Users	X		
Ramos, Michael	Washington County Sheriff's Office (representing Minnesota Sheriff's Association)	X		
Schallberg, Heidi	Met Council (representing metropolitan planning organizations)	X		
Severson, Michele	Council on Disability		X	
Shelton, Kyle	Center for Transportation Studies, University of Minnesota	X		
Sorenson, Brian	Minnesota Department of Transportation, Office of Traffic Engineering	X		
Tate, Jeff	Shakopee Police Department (representing Minnesota Chiefs of Police Association)			X
Witter, Andrew	Sherburne County (representing Minnesota County Engineers Association)			X
Wojcik, Michael	Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota	X		
Young, Charles	Minnesota Department of Human Services			X
<i>Council Staff</i>				
Dolan, Linda	Center for Transportation Studies, University of Minnesota	X		
Malinoff, Stephanie	Center for Transportation Studies, University of Minnesota	X		
Frandrup, Carissa	Center for Transportation Studies, University of Minnesota	X		
<i>Invited Guests</i>				
Brian Harmon	Minnesota Department of Public Safety		X	
Ken Johnson	Minnesota Department of Transportation	X		
Angela Seley	Minnesota Department of Public Safety		X	
Erik Zabel	Minnesota Department of Health	X		