Advisory Council on Traffic Safety

FINAL Minutes

Wednesday, April 9, 2025
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 1:01 p.m.

Welcome and Introductions
Chairs' Welcome and Introductions
Chair Hanson welcomed members. All members and staff introduced themselves and the organization they were representing on the Council.

Chair Hanson sent his regrets since he will need to leave the meeting early to testify at the Senate Transportation Committee.

Approve Today's Agenda
Witter made a motion to approve the agenda without any changes. Shelton seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Approve Minutes of February 12, 2025 Meeting
Jeppson made a motion to approve February 12, 2025 minutes without any changes. Moilanen seconded the motion. Motion carried.

The final meeting minutes are available on the February meeting webpage.

Membership Updates
No membership updates.

Council Business

Brian Awsumb is collaborating with the Office of Traffic Safety to revise the language to clearly define ACTS' grant-making authority. ACTS has been unable to utilize $3.4 million of its initial appropriations. ACTS is hoping to extend the spending deadline beyond July 1, 2025, as part of the Transportation Ombudsman bill. However, the challenge lies in the Governor's initial proposal to cut $1 million each year, while Senator Dibble is advocating for the restoration of $500,000.

The ACTS Annual Report has been completed, and Chair Hanson extends his thanks to everyone who contributed to putting it together. Hanson testified before the Senate Transportation Infrastructure Committee in Washington, D.C., where there was significant bipartisan interest in traffic safety.

All Minnesota budget items must be heard and passed through at least one committee by noon on April 11, 2025.

Predictive Analytics Tool Pilot Project Road Safety Information Center pilot project

Chair Hanson highlighted the predictive analytics traffic safety pilot project (Road Safety Information Center - RSIC) in the St. Cloud area, including Stearns and Sherburne Counties. The project aims to reduce serious and fatal crashes, particularly during the “100 Deadliest Days” of summer, by identifying high-risk times and locations using a combination of real-time and historical data.

Multiple data sources are being integrated into the model, including ROAR (Real-time Officer Activity Reporting), Waze telematics data (updated every 15 minutes), MnCrash historical crash data, vehicle and driver records, and EMS response times. The pilot will also involve input from local law enforcement, fire departments, EMS providers, trauma physicians, and the court system.

Using artificial intelligence and machine learning, the model will generate a risk matrix that highlights specific roadway types, days of the week, and time blocks with elevated crash risks. This information will be made available through a secure platform to all participating agencies and may also be accessible to the public through local law enforcement. Agencies can use this data to strategically deploy resources and countermeasures aimed at preventing crashes before they occur.

The St. Cloud area was chosen for its collaborative environment and existing partnerships among multiple jurisdictions. The model is currently in the final stages of development, with a rollout to partners planned in the coming weeks. Initially, hotspot data will be available by zip code, with further refinement to roadway-level detail underway. The model will be updated on a monthly, weekly, or even daily basis to reflect current conditions.

This initiative represents a first-of-its-kind effort nationally to apply real-time predictive analytics in a practical, real-world traffic safety setting. While the model is still being refined, it is expected to evolve and improve over time with continued data input and quality control.

There was a question whether MnDOT is a partner on this project. Yes, MnDOT is a partner and has their own data analytics tool they are working on as well. MnDOT’s tool focuses more on tying crashes to roadway elements. DPS and DOT are working on how to ensure the tools complement each other. The Center for Transportation Studies office has done work on every mile marker on the highway system and the amount of time it takes to get to trauma 1 centers. There will be a webinar on this topic in a few weeks. There was also discussion regarding how the pilot program is going to be evaluated. They also discussed using future data sources such as Strava for active transportation or weather forecasting. Telematics also allows us to look at the many near misses that occur.

Policy and Legislative Affairs Subcommittee

Members from multiple agencies provided updates on the status of federal and state-level developments affecting traffic safety and public health programs. There was some concern expressed over the ongoing federal-level disorganization, citing a lack of communication and clarity, especially regarding the five-year transportation bill reauthorization and staff shortages at NHTSA regional offices.

Vice Chair Sorenson noted that, despite uncertainties, the Safe Streets and Roads for All program continues to receive funding, which is encouraging. He emphasized ongoing efforts surrounding the next transportation authorization, with safety as a central theme. Chair Hanson mentioned the availability of experienced traffic safety professionals seeking new employment due to recent federal changes.

Vice Chair Diamond from the MDH provided a stark update on the Department of Health's situation, noting significant disruptions due to retroactive federal funding cuts amounting to $227 million. This has resulted in immediate layoffs, including long-tenured staff, and 13 more employees are at risk. Additionally, uncertainty prevails due to a lack of information from CDC and ongoing HHS restructuring, severely impacting injury prevention and mental health efforts.

From the tribal perspective, the transportation funding stream experienced delays but has resumed partial distribution. However, EV-related initiatives and tribal transportation committee functions remain on hold due to travel restrictions and funding freezes.

Chair Hanson highlighted contradictions in federal safety directives, specifically citing how guidance opposing 4-to-3 lane conversions undermines proven countermeasures. He urged the council to advocate for policies that support effective safety practices.

The group also discussed secondary effects on allied organizations, such as the Upper Midwest Agriculture Safety and Health Center, which may lose critical support.

On the state level, the Senate's omnibus bill includes multiple traffic safety-related allocations, such as funding for the advisory council, data analytics, DRE programs, safe routes to school, traffic calming, and work zone safety education. The House version of the bill is expected soon. Notably, legislation addressing motorcycle lane splitting is being considered, with proposed implementation in 2026. While the DRE program faced a budget cut from $5 million to $2 million annually, it will continue in a strong capacity. The house variant will be released this week and it is unsure what will be included in the house bill. They expect a special session later this summer to act upon potential federal cuts and expect a slowdown or retraction in the next six months.

Jeppson highlighted that the EPA is launching what is being called the most significant deregulatory action in U.S. history. Key elements of this effort include reevaluation of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Reporting Requirements where the federal government is considering reinstating mandatory GHG reporting programs, which could impose substantial costs on the energy sector. Also, revocation of California's Waiver which may remove California's long-standing waiver that allows it to set its own stricter vehicle emissions standards. This would mean all states must follow federal regulations, with no exceptions. These changes may not directly relate to traffic safety but could impact energy policy and environmental programming nationwide. Vice Chair Sorenson noted that while this development is primarily environmentally friendly, there is often an overlap between greenhouse gas policies and traffic safety outcomes. Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) language remains a particularly influential metric,

potentially more impactful than GHG alone in shaping transportation planning and safety considerations and should be continued to be monitored.

2024-2029 Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) Update and Discussion

Leuer provided an update on the SHSP, aiming to reduce fatal and serious injury crashes in Minnesota. The plan, updated every five years, is critical for securing $40-50 million annually through the Highway Safety Improvement Program and other federal funds. MnDOT leads the effort, in collaboration with the Departments of Public Safety and Health. Public feedback on the draft plan is open from March 14 to April 14, with final approval expected in May 2025.

The SHSP focuses on key crash categories such as lane departure, impairment, unbelted driving, and intersections. The plan identifies 75 strategies and 242 tactics, with 106 key tactics aimed at immediate impact. Equity is incorporated into the strategies to address disparities, especially in pedestrian, bicycle, and unlicensed driver-related crashes.

Leuer discussed the importance of socioeconomic factors and road design in traffic safety, emphasizing the need for a traffic safety culture to improve driver behavior. He also noted the influence of speed and driver attention in preventing crashes.

The Advisory Council's role includes advocating for funding and multi-agency collaboration, and they will prioritize legislative actions, such as automated enforcement. The council endorsed the SHSP framework and emphasized the importance of broad public participation in the comment period.
A discussion on the inclusion of "equity" in the SHSP followed. While there were concerns about the term, MnDOT will proceed with the current language, acknowledging that federal partners do not ultimately need to approve the language. Adjustments can be made, if necessary, without delaying submission.

ACTS' role in supporting the SHSP's implementation will be critical to it's success. As of today, the public comment period has received positive feedback, and the plan will be refined based on responses.

Member Profile

Andrew Witter, County Engineer and Public Works Director for Sherburne County, was introduced as the Minnesota County Engineers Association representative. He shared his background, with 16 1/2 years at Anoka County before moving to Sherburne County

He provided an overview of the Minnesota County Engineers Association, which includes 22 to 25 subcommittees, and several workgroups focused on legislative and safety initiatives, as well as scholarship efforts to attract new engineers. Witter presented a brief history of county engineering in Minnesota, dating back to 1849, when county roads were first established. He highlighted key milestones, such as the first federal aid in 1850, the creation of the trunk highway system in 1921, and the formation of the county state aid highway system in 1958. He also discussed the statutory role of county highway engineers, who oversee responsibilities like bridge inspections, weight restrictions, and capital planning. He emphasized the importance of county engineers in maintaining and developing Minnesota's road systems.

Subcommittee and Working Group Updates

Project Idea Solicitation Process Subcommittee
No report.

Traffic Incident Management (TIM) Working Group
Leidle provided an update on the formation of the Traffic Incident Management (TIM) Working Group, which he chairs. The first meeting focused on understanding the goals and progress of the TIM program, including reducing responder exposure, preventing secondary crashes, and improving incident clearance time. The program aims to enhance safety for responders, the public, and overall mobility, and is being built upon a foundation of prior successes.

A key discussion point was the importance of developing training, communication, and policies that address both interstate and rural system needs. The group emphasized the role of ACTSl in elevating the TIM program's status and providing feedback on its direction, as well as supporting needed policy and legislative changes.

Leidle shared statistics highlighting the dangers responders face, noting 16 fatalities in Minnesota since 1997. He also discussed the importance of the "move over" law and quick clearance to prevent secondary crashes and reduce congestion. A statewide open roads agreement between MnDOT and the Minnesota State Patrol has prioritized lane reopening.

Looking forward, the next steps include refining the statewide TIM framework, organizing subgroups, and improving efficiency in response efforts. Leidle invited participation from those interested in becoming more involved. He also highlighted the availability of a TIM newsletter with real-time safety information.

The group's next meeting will focus on planning and structuring subgroups. Leidle mentioned that the TIM program will be featured at several of this year's TZD regional workshops.

Safe Roads Coalition Working Group
The Safe Roads Coalition Working Group has held three meetings so far, with the next scheduled for next week. The group's primary focus has been identifying areas of success and addressing challenges within the coalition's operations. Key discussions have revolved around the flexibility and standardization of grant dollars used by the coalitions. There is a desire for a more tailored approach, acknowledging varying needs across communities, while still maintaining consistency. The possibility of implementing a tiered system for grant funding was also raised, with further discussions needed to determine its feasibility.

Another area of focus has been the need for additional training for coordinators, particularly for both current and new coalitions applying for funding. The group has also raised concerns about the effectiveness of coalitions, questioning whether they are simply performing routine tasks or if there are opportunities to expand and improve their efforts. Equipment and incentives for community engagement were highlighted as crucial needs. While incentives could help draw people to educational events, the lack of funding for such incentives remains a challenge.

The group also discussed the difficulty in finding dedicated champions within communities to drive traffic safety initiatives and engage in outreach efforts. Funding limitations were identified as a significant barrier to involving all 87 counties, with questions raised about whether the organizations applying for the funding are the best fit to manage it. Additionally, the standardization of fatal and

serious injury reviews emerged as an issue, with plans to update the guidebook and possibly integrate Traffic Incident Management (TIM) questions into the review process.

The next meeting will focus on developing solutions to these challenges and moving the discussions forward.

Public Comment

We had a successful second annual Tribal Traffic Safety Summit (TTSS), held at Prairie's Edge Casino in March 2025. The event featured a wide range of topics, including discussions on safe systems, roadway safety, and a presentation on human trafficking and its impact on traffic safety personnel. A representative from the Bureau of Indian Affairs also provided an update. The 2026 Tribal Traffic Safety Summit has already been scheduled for March 23-25 at the Black Bear Casino, hosted by the Fond du Lac Tribe. Planning for this event is already underway, with significant contributions from Northeast TZD coordinator Rahya Geisler.

The discussion then turned to improving attendance at the summit. This year saw representation from nine of the eleven tribes, which was considered a success. To encourage attendance, efforts are being made to rotate the summit location across the state to accommodate the tribes' travel constraints. Additionally, there are plans to integrate tribal traffic safety topics into the annual TZD conference to foster better statewide discussions.

A key point raised was the need for educational sessions at both the TTSS and the annual TZD Conference that focus on improving collaboration between state partners and tribal nations. This could include providing training on how best to work with tribal nations in traffic safety initiatives.

There are two upcoming events. The Traffic Safety Day at the Mall of America will be held May 3rd. The upcoming Auto Show is seeking volunteers. The show dates are April 11-19, 2025, at the Minneapolis Convention Center; however, the show is closed on April 14 and 15. Volunteers will receive free entry in exchange for their assistance at the event booth.

Adjourn

Vice Chair Sorenson thanked everyone for their time, attention, and involvement in traffic safety.

Wojcik made a motion to adjourn, Moilanen seconded the motion. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 3:22 p.m.

The next Advisory Council on Traffic Safety meeting will be Wednesday, June 11, 2025 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	
Council Members				
Aasen, Paul	Minnesota Safety Council	X		
Ali-Mumin, Abdirahman	Representing Vulnerable Road Users			X
Bogojevic, Christina	Minnesota State Patrol		X	
Calistro, Gina	Representing Victims Advocacy Organizations	X		
Cocking, Aaron	Insurance Federation of Minnesota			X
Diamond, Catherine	Minnesota Department of Health, Injury and Violence Prevention Section	X		
Donohue, Josephine	AAA- The Auto Club Group	X		
Ferguson, Dylan	Emergency Medical Services Regulatory Board		X	
Hanson, Mike	Minnesota Department of Public Safety, Office of Traffic Safety	X		
Hanson, Richard	Minnesota Operation Lifesaver			X
Hartzell, Chris	City of Woodbury (representing League of Minnesota Cities)	X		
Hausladen, John	Minnesota Trucking Association			X
Hernandez, Kristine	TZD Statewide Communications Director		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
Larson, Annette	TZD Statewide Program and Operations Director	X		
Leidle, Reed	Safety Signs (representing contractors)	X		
Leuer, Derek	Minnesota Department of Transportation, State Traffic Safety Engineer		X	
Martini, Nick	Northstar Bus Lines (representing Minnesota Association for Pupil Transportation)		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		
Schleck, Jessica	TZD Regional Coordinator	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
Council Staff				
Dolan, Linda	Center for Transportation Studies, University of Minnesota	X		
Malinoff, Stephanie	Center for Transportation Studies, University of Minnesota			X
Piper, Jackson	Center for Transportation Studies, University of Minnesota	X		
Invited Guests				
Awsumb, Brian		X		
Harmon, Brian		X		
Mason, Whitney		X		
Oster, Kristen		X		