

**MID-ATLANTIC NHTSA /FHWA/FMCSA TRANSPORTATION SAFETY FORUM FOR
FEDERAL AND STATE OFFICIALS DECEMBER 7-8, 2004**

GREENBELT, MARYLAND

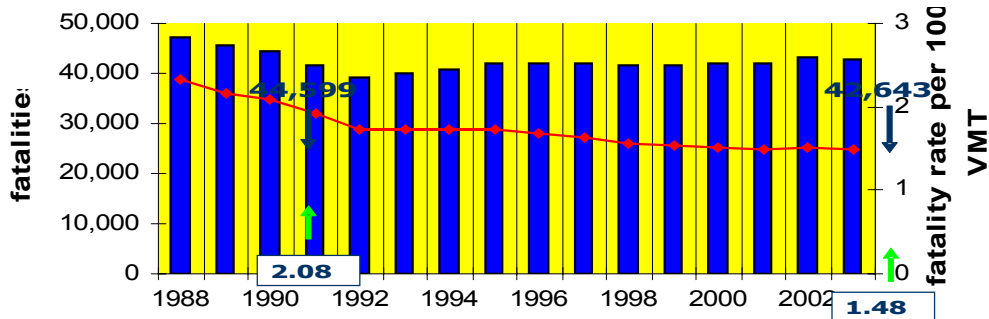
Introduction

Injury is the leading cause of death in the US from about six months to 45 years of age and because it so disproportionately strikes the young, it is also the leading cause of lost years of productive life. Motor vehicle injury is overwhelmingly the largest component of these losses.

Safety improvement requires progress toward reducing the crash experience of drivers, passengers and other more vulnerable road users. In the US, we take pride in the quality and quantity of our roads, vehicles and road users. However, in 2003, 42,643 people died on the nation's roadways and nearly three million were injured in motor vehicle related crashes. Over the past decade the number of fatalities has remained essentially unchanged. Yet, during that same period of time, we spent 1.3 trillion dollars on roadway improvements. Many more millions were spent in vehicle improvements, enforcement campaigns and educational endeavors. Yet, the US has slipped to eleventh in the world in terms of road safety and many are struggling with the identification of successful strategies to stop the carnage on our roadways. In the absence of substantial progress, more than 400,000 people will die on the roadways during the current decade at a cost of nearly two trillion dollars.

The major focus and most visible commitment to safety in the US over at least the past two decades has been on vehicle crash worthiness and driver behavior; yet, the effectiveness of those strategies appears to have plateaued in terms of reducing the *number* of crashes, injuries and fatalities. Michael Halladay, FHWA Office of Safety emphasized this point in his conference remarks. Figure 1 graphically demonstrates the plateau that has existed for much of the past decade.

Figure 1: The Safety Plateau



US Transportation Secretary Norman Mineta issued a “Call to Quarters” in 2003. He set a national goal of reducing fatalities to a rate of 1.0 fatalities per hundred million vehicle miles traveled (VMT) by 2008.¹ All US DOT modes and many other organizations are supporting this goal including the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO), the Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA), the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators (AAMVA), the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance (CVSA) and the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP).

A number of strategies are being implemented across the nation to drive down the human and economic costs of motor vehicle crashes and meet the goal of 1.0 fatalities per 100M VMT by 2008. Many of these initiatives involve improvements to the processes for identifying problems and making investment decisions, i.e., actions to address the management of the safety system. To effectively identify and characterize safety problems, issues, challenges, and to make successful safety investments, requires access to crash and other safety-related data that are accurate and timely.

Making these improvements is a national priority and most states are working toward a resolution of their data issues and challenges. In December 2004, NHTSA, FHWA and FMCSA jointly sponsored a meeting of the Mid-Atlantic States² to examine transportation safety planning and the state data systems used to support the planning processes.

Purpose

The purpose of the Mid-Atlantic meeting was to foster coordination, communication and cooperation among the Federal and State agencies in identifying current and future needs for improving traffic safety.

¹ The current (2003 data) national fatality rate is 1.48 per 100M VMT or 14.66 per 100k population.

² The Mid-Atlantic states include Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia.

The meeting focused on two key goals for all Federal and State Agencies; (1) integrating data into the transportation planning process and (2) improving the access, quality, quantity and timeliness of crash data. The data discussion focused on improving data systems, including the technological, administrative and political challenges that prevent resolution of existing traffic safety data problems. Data was chosen because it is a priority for all Federal Agencies and it impacts all program areas. States must have access to high quality, timely data to identify problems, develop program plans and evaluate outcomes. The meeting began with a discussion of the planning process, since safety conscious planning is a data driven process as well as a Department priority. (Please see Appendix A for the full agenda.)

Participants

The meeting was attended by program planners and persons responsible for data management and analysis from each of the states and federal personnel at both the headquarters and regional levels from FHWA, FMCSA and NHTSA. (Appendix B contains a list of the participants.)

Managing Safety in the Transportation Planning Process

Safety management has been a topic of consideration and concern in the US since the late 1960's. Renewed emphasis came from the 1991 reauthorization of the highway bill known as the Intermodal Surface Transportation Equity Act (ISTEA) which required all states to develop safety management systems.³ ISTEA was reauthorized in 1998 by the Transportation Equity Act for the Twenty-First Century (TEA-21). One of the interesting changes brought about by TEA-21 was the requirement for all state departments of transportation (DOTs) and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) to make safety an explicit consideration in their transportation planning documents. This marks the first time that safety was named as a transportation planning priority in the federal legislation.

Each statewide and metropolitan planning process shall provide for consideration of projects and strategies that will increase the safety and security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users."

TEA-21

Implementing the planning requirement presents many challenges for transportation planners, not the least of which is identifying, accessing and analyzing safety data. Nevertheless, safety planning is a data driven process; therefore, overcoming these challenges is imperative for developing plans that effectively integrate safety. Safety integration in the US is commonly referred to as Safety Conscious Planning.

Data Needs in the Transportation Planning Process

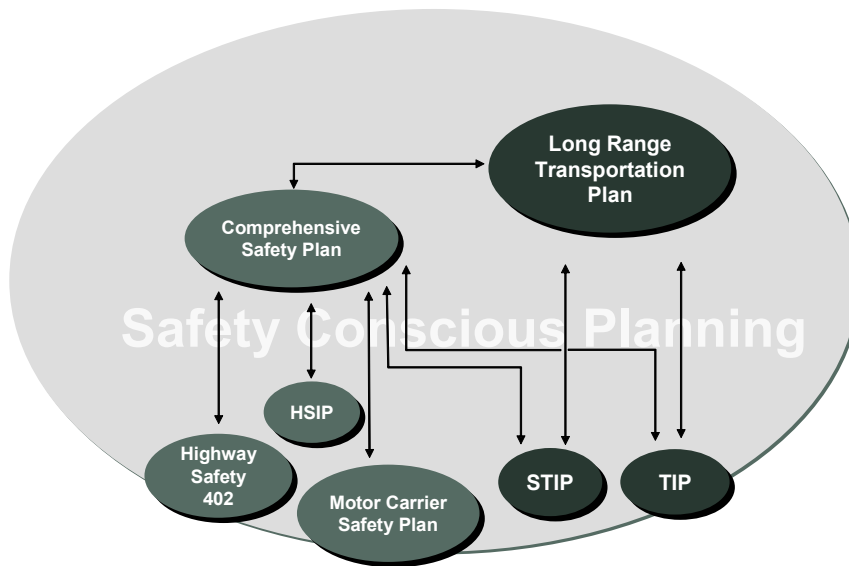
Jill Hochman, FHWA Office of Interstate and Border Planning, explained the data needs of transportation planners pointing out that they use data at every step in the process. Data are used to develop a vision for the transportation system; to inform investment decisions and decision-makers. Data are gathered to determine what the community wants as well as what it needs; to identify current safety challenges as well as to determine desired safety-related transportation system characteristics for the future. Data are needed to compare system performance to the vision and the results of different investment strategies. Finally, data can be used to identify adjustments and evaluate results.

³ This requirement was eliminated two years later.

Ms. Hochman encouraged the participants to continue working on weaknesses in the crash data systems which include under-reporting, field coding by police, timeliness/accessibility and liability concerns. Overcoming these deficiencies will help ensure that transportation planning processes produce safety improvements.

She reminded the participants that most states have either begun or will soon begin to embark on a process to develop comprehensive transportation safety plans. It is hoped that these collaborative, data driven plans result in marshalling the resources of all transportation agencies and focusing them on the locations and countermeasures most likely to produce positive outcomes. It will take good data systems to accomplish that goal. Figure 2 demonstrates the linkages among the various agency plans responsible for safety.

Figure 2: Coordinated Safety Planning



Using Crash Data for Decision Making

State transportation and safety agencies are required to establish and document safety problems prior to the expenditure of federal funds. They typically analyze statewide crash data to identify the problems but other data may be used as well including enforcement data, traffic counts, roadway characteristics, EMS run times, hospital outcomes, etc. HES or hazard elimination (Section 401) funding usually addresses high accident locations. More and more states are beginning to look at roadway segments, corridors and intersections for further analysis. On the other hand, most states examine crashes by county and city to identify candidates for highway safety (Section 402) funding. In some cases, crash rates are used; in others the raw number of crashes is examined. Sometimes a severity index is utilized. In many states, some combination of the above is used to determine safety investment decisions. Essentially, each state has developed its own unique method of identifying high crash locations, abnormal locations or "sites with promise" for improving safety.

The primary source of crash data is derived from police crash reports. The States' crash records systems are under the jurisdiction of a state agency but the agency itself varies from state to state. In all cases, state and local police collect the data and most states utilize a uniform police accident report (PAR) form. In some cases the quality of the data is in question for a variety of reasons. First, in the event of an incident, the police are responsible for treating the victims, clearing the roadway and getting the traffic flow moving again. Completing the PAR is normally not a top priority at the scene of the crash. Various electronic equipment and software packages are increasingly used to improve the quality, quantity and timeliness of crash data.

Status Report: State Traffic Records Systems

Each of the state jurisdictions provided an overview of their data systems. They were asked specifically to address a list of questions developed by the federal sponsors. For the most part, the questions focused on action steps that NHTSA encourages the states to undertake to ensure improvement to their traffic data systems.

1. Does the state have a multi-agency Traffic Records Coordinating Committee (TRCC)?
2. Has the state conducted a traffic records assessment and developed a strategic plan to address the recommendations?
3. What percentage of the MMUCC (Model Minimum Uniform Crash Criteria) are captured by the state's data system?
4. Has the state begun or made progress in implementing the CODES system (Crash Outcome Data Evaluation System)?
5. List the greatest challenges and any best practices.
6. What are the state's top priorities for data system improvements?

Data System Improvement Plans

In addition to the above, each state outlined plans for data system improvements.

Delaware

- ◆ Continued enhancement of the EMS Data Information Network (electronic patient care reports)
- ◆ Continued efforts to link crash, patient care reports, and hospital discharge data through CODES
- ◆ Create an integrated data collection system for the analysis of crash, location, EMS (ambulance run times, etc.), DMV⁴ (driver histories) and adjudication data.

District of Columbia

- ◆ Updating the database into Oracle-based DBMS and web application with schematic collision diagrams.
- ◆ Revising accident report (PD-10) into one form, to add:
 - Driver, passenger, pedestrian, vehicle and collision information
 - Insurance information
 - Commercial motor carrier information
 - All the elements in the form will comply with the Model Minimum Uniform Crash Criteria Guideline requirements.
- ◆ Next Phase: Create an electronic accident reporting form using PDAs, a pilot project that improves the quality and timelines of the data.
- ◆ Extend the new form to data integration and links to driver licensing, vehicle licensing, citations, roadway characteristics and medical outcomes.

⁴ DMV (department of motor vehicles) is the term most commonly used to refer to licensing agencies.

Maryland

- ◆ Hire a MHSO Data/TRCC program coordinator.
- ◆ Develop a Memorandum of Agreement for all participating TRCC Agencies to that will secure buy-in, commitment and cooperation; document role; and, maintain stability in the event of managerial change.
- ◆ Conduct a traffic records assessment May 1-6, 2005.
- ◆ Update the traffic records strategic plan.
- ◆ Develop the capacity for access to real-time data.

Pennsylvania

- ◆ Schedule a new traffic records assessment, possibly in late spring or early summer.
- ◆ Request federal assistance to gain support and involvement of State Police and Deputy Secretary for Health and Services in the PA TRCC.
- ◆ Use the assessment report as a foundation for a NEW strategic plan with enforcement potential.
- ◆ Develop electronic crash data capture, including police crash reporting software.
- ◆ Set new production and quality standards to enhance crash database system and reduce backlog in processing reports.
- ◆ Develop and implement new crash data accessibility standards.

Virginia

- ◆ Identify, verify and prioritize existing traffic records report recommendations by Star Mountain (consultant) in 1995.
- ◆ Identify/verify current data needs, equipment, hardware and processes.
- ◆ Research and evaluate traffic records systems in other states.
- ◆ Develop a Memorandum of Agreement among agencies to be reviewed by the state's safety management system on December 16, 2004. MOU includes:
 - Project proposal and timeline;
 - Agreement to change policies and procedures
 - Agreement to fund the project
- ◆ Conduct an agency stakeholders meeting on January 6, 2005 to discuss multi-agency effort to develop a Traffic Records Electronic Data System).
- ◆ Utilize wireless technology to submit crash data.
- ◆ Provide access to timely and accurate data by users statewide for query and analysis.

West Virginia

- ◆ Implement a statewide paper-based uniform citation
 - Prepare law enforcement agencies for the new format.
 - Build a base infrastructure for system linkage: citation and DUI tracking.
 - Immediate Goals
 1. Complete citation design by the end of January 2005
 2. Obtain endorsements from the agencies legally required to approve such changes by early spring 2005: State Police, Division of Highways Commissioner and DMV Commissioner.
 3. Implement paper-based citation statewide by late spring or early summer 2005.
- ◆ Build a statewide citation tracking system linked to convictions and dispositions.
- ◆ Prepare and implement a statewide DUI tracking system that monitors a DUI from cradle to grave.
- ◆ Implement a system where citation and crash data are electronically submitted.
- ◆ Implement Supreme Court data system improvements.
- ◆ Implement electronic disposition submission between courts and the DMV.
- ◆ Continue crash system improvements.

Summary

It is clear that each of the states in the Mid-Atlantic region is addressing data improvement issues with as much energy and speed as appears possible. As a result of this meeting, all of the Mid-Atlantic States have requested a NHTSA Traffic Records Assessment to assist in guiding their data system improvements (all will be completed by FY2006). The federal agencies continue to be supportive offering training, assessments, funding and technical assistance. As these data systems grow and improve, the transportation planning process will reflect the changes by improving analysis of current situations as well as forecasting future crash problems. Data managers should welcome a partnership with transportation planners who can assist with analysis and communicate their needs to elected and appointed officials.

APPENDIX A: AGENDA

Transportation Safety Forum for Federal and State Officials “Improving Data, Reaching Goals, Saving Lives”

December 7-8, 2004

Day One

Salon A-B

9:00 am

Registration and Continental Breakfast

10:15 am

Welcome & Purpose

Elizabeth A. Baker, Ph.D., NHTSA Mid-Atlantic Regional Administrator
(beth.baker@nhtsa.dot.gov)

Alan R. Steger, FHWA Director of Field Services, Northern Region
(alan.steger@fhwa.dot.gov)

Joseph L. Muscaro, FMCSA Eastern Field Administrator
(joseph.muscaro@fmcsa.dot.gov)

10:30 am

Federal Partners Perspective – United We Stand!

Marlene K. Markison, Associate Administrator for Injury Control Operations and Resources, NHTSA (marlene.markison@nhtsa.dot.gov)

Terry Shelton, Associate Administrator for Research, Technology and Information Management and Chief Information Officer, FMCSA
(terry.shelton@fmcsa.dot.gov)

Michael L. Halladay, Office Director, Program Integration and Delivery, Office of Safety, FHWA (michael.halladay@fhwa.dot.gov)

12:00 pm

Luncheon – Annapolis Ballroom

Facilitator: Valencia Williams, Community Planner, FHWA MD Division
(valencia.williams@fhwa.dot.gov)

Keynote Speaker: Jill L. Hochman, Director, Office of Interstate & Border Planning, FHWA (jill.hochman@fhwa.dot.gov)

“Safety Conscious Planning”

1:30 pm

Session I: State Traffic Record System Overview

Facilitator: Susan Herbel, Ph.D., Principal, Transportation Safety Solutions Group (susan.herbel@thetssgroup.com)

Technical Advisory Panel:

Robert Scopatz, Ph.D., Director of Research and Government Services, Data Nexus, Inc. (bscopatz@data-nexus.com);

Betsy Benkowski, CVARS and Crash Data Improvement Project Manager, DOT/FMCSA (betsy.benkowski@fmcsa.dot.gov);

Michael Griffith, Technical Director for the Office of Safety Research, DOT/FHWA (mike.griffith@fhwa.dot.gov);

William Perez, Ph.D., Principal, Cambridge Systematic (wperez@camsys.com)

Delaware: Jana Simpler, Management Analyst III, DE Office of Highway Safety (jana.simpler@state.de.us)

Michael McDonald, Director of Information Technology, DE State Police (Michael.McDonald@state.de.us)

Technical Advisory Panel / Question and Answer Period

2:45 pm

BREAK

3:00 pm

Session II: State Traffic Record System Overview

Facilitator: Susan Herbel, Ph.D.

West Virginia: Kim Christian, Governor's Highway Safety Program (kchristian@dot.state.wv.us)

Marsha Mays, Safety Management Engineer, WV Division of Highways (mmays@dot.state.wv.us)

Technical Advisory Panel / Question and Answer Period

4:15 - 4:30 pm

Overview of Day Two/ Adjourn

DAY TWO SALON A-B

7:30 am

Continental Breakfast

8:15 am

Session III: State Traffic Record System Overview

Facilitator: Susan Herbel, Ph.D.

Pennsylvania: William Hunter, Manager, Crash Information Systems & Analysis Division, Bureau of Highway Safety & Traffic Engineering (bhunter@state.pa.us)

Technical Advisory Panel / Question and Answer Period

9:20 am

Session IV: State Traffic Record System Overview

Facilitator: Susan Herbel, Ph.D.

District of Columbia: Douglas Noble, Associate Director for Traffic Services Administration, District Dept. of Transportation (doug.noble@dc.gov)

Technical Advisory Panel / Question and Answer Period

10:25 am

BREAK

10:45 am

Session V: State Traffic Record System Overview

Facilitator: Susan Herbel, Ph.D. Virginia:

Robert Breitenbach, Assistant Professor/Director, Transportation Safety Training Center, Virginia Commonwealth University (rbreiten@vcu.edu)

R. Robert Rasmussen, II, Program Administration Manager III, Mobility Management Division, Virginia Department of Transportation (robert.rasmussen@vdot.virginia.gov)

Robin Grier, Deputy Director, Department of Motor Vehicles (robin.grier@dmv.virginia.gov)

Technical Advisory Panel / Question and Answer Period

11:50 am

Luncheon – Annapolis Ballroom

Facilitator: Elizabeth A. Baker, Ph.D., NHTSA Mid-Atlantic Regional Administrator (beth.baker@nhtsa.dot.gov)

Keynote Speaker: Russ Rader, Director Media Relations, Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (rrader@iihs.org)

“Working with the News Media to Promote Safety”

1:15 pm

Session VI: State Traffic Record System Overview

Facilitator: Susan Herbel, Ph.D.

Maryland:

Vernon Betkey, Chief, Maryland Highway Safety Office (vbetkey@sha.state.md.us)

David Bozak, Vice President, InfoGroup, Inc. (bozak@erols.com)

Timothy Kerns, Database Engineer, National Study Center for Trauma and EMS, University of Maryland – Baltimore (tkerns@som.umaryland.edu)

Technical Advisory Panel / Question and Answer Period

2:20-2:45 pm

Concluding Remarks / Adjourn – Susan Herbel, Ph.D.



APPENDIX B: PARTICIPANT LIST

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