

Executive Committee for Highway Safety (ECHS)

Virtual Meeting Minutes

May 6, 2022

Location:

Microsoft Team Meeting @ 10:00 a.m.

In Attendance: Isaac Avery, Sharath Bhat, Brad Bradford, Julia Casadonte, Stacy Deans, Alan Dellapenna, Anne Dickerson, Mark Ezzell, Greg Ferrara, Daniel Finley, Wayne Goodwin, Tony Hayes, Heather Hildebrandt, Jeff Jaeger, Marianne Karth, Elyse Keefe, Kevin Lacy, Cheryl Leonard, Chris Lukasina, Brian Mayhew, Jon McCormick, Michael Messer, Chris Oliver, Edward Parker, Joanna Reese, Tammy Richards, Lisa Riegel, Tracy Russ, Laura Sandt, Shawn Troy, Billy Williams

Call to Order and Introductions

Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) Federal Safety Funding

Mr. Mark Ezzell discussed the Highway Safety Implications associated with the Bipartisan Infrastructure and Jobs Act ([GHSP-NCDOT Bipartisan Infrastructure Act pdf](#)). The new infrastructure law provides an additional \$62 million to both 402 and 405 funding. Some of the expanded uses of flexible 402 funding include automated enforcement of school or work zones that comply with USDOT guidelines, programs to address driver misuse of new technology and allowing states to use funds in cross-border initiatives. Some of the Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2024 changes associated with 405 funding include expansion of impaired driving grants (405d) to make it easier for states to qualify for ignition interlock funding, expansion of distracted driving grants (405e) so 50% of the funds go to all states and elimination of stringent restrictions associated with graduated licensing grants (405g). Mr. Mayhew also discussed some of the USDOT changes towards Highway Safety. The federal government's first-ever [National Roadway Safety Strategy](#) has been adopted and zero is the only acceptable number of deaths and serious injuries on our roadways. The new infrastructure law also provides a moderate increase of \$78 million to Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) funding. Some of the flexibility associated with HSIP funding includes usage of funds to support automated traffic enforcement and speed safety cameras, increased flexibility with the Safe Routes to School program and flexibility with specified non-infrastructure safety projects.

Fatal and Serious Injury Trend Update

Mr. Brian Mayhew provided an update on our state's fatal and serious injury trends ([Fatal and Serious Injury Trend Update pdf](#)). Mr. Mayhew noted that our 2021 fatalities have continued to increase and have well surpassed the previous 2007 modern record high mark. Currently our 2022 Year to Date (January-March) overall fatalities numbers are higher than the 2021 comparisons in the majority of our 2019 North Carolina Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) emphasis areas. Mr. Mayhew also provided additional information on our statewide motorcycle crash facts. Our total motorcycle crash fatalities are up approximately 14% from 2020 to 2021. 51% of our motorcycle crashes occurred in urban locations and from 2016 to 2021 there was a 34% increase in motorcycle crash fatalities. Additional motorcycle crash facts and information on our statewide serious injury trends are available in the presentation materials.

National Crash Data Trends Overview

Ms. Laura Sandt presented information on some of the National Crash Data Trends we are seeing in our country ([National Crash Data Trends pdf](#)). Traffic fatalities are rising across the United States and in 2019 American Indian residents had the highest rate of injury deaths. A Governors Highway Safety Association review of vulnerable road users indicated that “Black children ages 4–15 had the highest rates of fatalities involving pedestrians and people not in vehicles as a percentage of all motor vehicle traffic fatalities.” Ms. Sandt also reviewed some of the system trends we are seeing with safe road users, safe vehicles, safe speeds, safe roads, and post-crash care. Additional information on the national crash data trends and roadway crash data resources are available in the presentation materials.

CY 2023 Preliminary Safety Performance Measures

Mr. Chris Oliver presented information on the preliminary targets for our state’s Safety Performance Measures ([CY 2023 Preliminary Safety Performance Measures pdf](#)). The targets for our state’s five performance measures are based on the 2019 North Carolina SHSP goal of reducing all fatalities and serious injuries by half by 2035, moving towards zero by 2050. We received the results from our state’s Calendar Year (CY) 2020 Safety Performance Target Assessment and once again we have not met or made significant progress toward achieving our Safety Performance Targets. Therefore, we are in the process of developing a HSIP Implementation Plan for FY 2023 and we must also use obligation authority equal to the State’s FY 2019 HSIP apportionment for HSIP projects in FY 2023. Our state’s Draft CY 2023 targets were also presented, with the final targets to be set once the 2021 Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS), Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) and crash data have been stabilized.

Discussion for Support (NC Underride)

Ms. Marianne Karth presented personal research information she has gathered in memory of her daughters Anna Leah and Mary Karth who were North Carolina underride victims ([Underride Information pdf](#)). The geometric mismatch between the height of a large truck’s rear, side and front bumpers when involved in an underride crash with a passenger vehicle bypasses a cars’ crashworthy features. Unfortunately, vulnerable road users which include pedestrians, bicyclists and motorcyclists are also sometimes involved in underride crashes. While the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) has recognized nine North American trailer manufacturers with the TOUGHGUARD award which was introduced in 2017 for good rear underride protection on some or all of their trailers, there is also a need to retrofit older trailers. As she continues her mission to make truck crashes more survivable, Ms. Karth would like consideration for a resolution or letter of support for underride legislation/regulation. The ECHS will circulate a request to see if the committee members would like to provide some type of support.

Future Meeting Dates

- **September 2, 2022 @ 10:00 am**
- **January 13, 2023 @ 10:00 am (TENTATIVE)** **Location (TBA)**
- **May 5, 2023 @ 10:00 am (TENTATIVE)**

If there is a need to reschedule any meeting, we will let you know well in advance of the scheduled date.

Meeting agendas, minutes and presentations are also available on the [ECHS website](#).