

# Texas Motorcycle Safety Coalition Meeting Minutes

**August 8, 2016**

Texas A&M Transportation Institute

Gibb Gilchrist Building, Room 1023

10:00 am - 3:00 pm

## Meeting Minute Highlights

[Texas Strategic Action Plan for Motorcycles Receives an Update](#)

[TTI Collaborating with DSHS to Create Rural Toolkit](#)

[TxDOT Has New Motorcycle Safety Media Developed](#)

[TTI Releases Series of Motorcycle Rider Gear Use Safety PSAs](#)

[NHTSA's New Rules Effect Look Learn Live Outreach Booth](#)

## Opening remarks

TMSC Chair Chris Beireis started the meeting by welcoming everyone and introducing Dr. Mike Manser.

## 2016 – 2021 Texas Motorcycle Strategic Action Plan

Dr. Mike Manser of TTI introduced the update to the Texas Strategic Action Plan for Motorcycles. He explained that the idea behind the action plan was to detail activities to improve motorcycle safety in the next five years. Manser invited any feedback from anyone in the room. A final version will be ready within the next few coming weeks. Dr. Manser discussed:

- The methods used for collecting information for the SAP:
  - Focus groups: Various focus groups consisting of a range of motorcycle safety stakeholders were held to identify perspectives and priorities for countermeasures. 50 some countermeasures fed into the initial set of focus groups that two TTI researchers conducted.
  - The survey from the Motorcycle Safety Forum yielded a short list of countermeasure priorities. The short list was informative, but very difficult to ascertain top priorities. Paige Ericson, TTI, provided scores of mean, median, and range that determined the ranking of countermeasures. List of countermeasures

came from a variety of sources; original SAP; a variety of other safety documents in Texas like the Strategic Highway Safety Plan; NHTSA documents.

- The information the SAP is intended to produce and be disseminated:
  - A comprehensive list of TxDOT funded motorcycle projects and other motorcycle safety efforts in Texas, for example, the Motorcyclist Safety Equipment Use Program. Details about the funding for motorcycle safety are also provided.
  - Crash analysis data is another section of the SAP. Research used in this section was provided by TTI's Dr. Eva Shipp. The statistics section highlights high level statistics, like overall fatalities in the past six-to-seven years, trends in incapacitating injuries, urban vs rural fatalities, incapacitating and fatal crashes by counties, fatality rates per 10,000 people, types of motorcycle crashes (run-off-road, head on) and other various motorcycle crash related statistics.
  - Counter measures identified by the focus groups and survey are listed in the SAP. For each countermeasure, details about the countermeasure are provided as well as the mean score, median score, mode score, and range for priorities. Examples of countermeasures include, "seek guidance to encourage legislation to reinstate the mandatory universal motorcycle helmet law for all operators and passengers."
- Current Product
  - The final publication will be available on Looklearnlive.org.
  - The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) must review it.
  - TxDOT officials who rank, score, and award motorcycle related grants will have access to the document and be able to use it as a guiding document for understanding motorcycle safety issues in Texas, as well as how the stakeholders view countermeasures.

### **Questions/other discussions**

DJ Jeffries brought up TxDOT funding, which he explained allocates less money to motorcycle safety programs than alcohol and seat-belt-use programs, but compared to other state DOTs', Texas spends substantially more on motorcycle safety. Motorcycle fatalities have decreased three years in a row, and other states recognize this. Other states have been contacting TxDOT and TTI to use campaign materials, "which speaks to the quality of our programming", according to DJ Jeffries. DJ brought up that there is a possibility of TxDOT being able to acquire more money for motorcycle safety programs and campaigns. TxDOT can now ask the state legislature for general revenue 501 funds that can be allocated to motorcycle safety campaigns. Currently, DPS has the majority of the money.

A question about the Increasing Recruitment/Retention of Motorcyclist Safety Training Instructors grant was asked. One attendee had concerns with the grant being done, but the problem of a decreasing rider coach population has not been solved. DJ explained that this particular grant is finished, as this particular grant was to create online tools and continuing education classes online. TxDOT is accepting grants regarding this issue.

Passing a universal helmet law was discussed and debated among the group. One member pointed out that news media tends to report whether or not the rider involved in a fatal crash was wearing a helmet. He contended that the public perception is that helmets equate to safety. A lot of coalition members expressed being personal proponents and users of helmets, but want to keep the helmet law a personal choice for each rider to make. DJ said that a universal helmet law would probably not happen in the state of Texas, but helmets do save lives and is a valid item to analyze and include in the SAP.

The issue of training costs was brought up by Jude Schexnyder from TxDOT. The idea of vouchers or subsidized classes was discussed. The state is unable to subsidize private businesses. Jude believes that the SAP should include language that says that the dedicated safety money should be used to reduce the cost, not just make the cost reasonable.

### **Conclusion:**

Manser ended the presentation by encouraging Coalition members to read the SAP once it is published and available online, and get in touch with TTI if there are any constructive critiques for the document.

## **Presentation of Motorcycle Data**

Manser presented motorcycle data from a project he has been working on with Dr. Eva Shipp and DSHS. The data looks at hospital data that looks at injuries from crashes. This data provides more information than CRIS records. The development of a rural tool kit is the focus of this project. The rural toolkit is a resource for smaller, rural towns and communities to improve their traffic safety. Dr. Manser explained that this rural tool kit walks users through the steps to improve traffic safety. The communities that they are looking at have a significant problem with motorcycle safety. Areas of Texas were defined by using school districts, as they are smaller, easier understood, and more manageable than identifying areas by counties or political districts.

A list of the top ten communities that could benefit from a rural tool kit was created, with the largest cluster being four communities in the top ten located West of San Antonio. The Hill Country and specifically the Three Sisters area are located in these four communities. For the four communities, there are 11 severe crashes per 1,000 people. Crashes were identified by

vehicle type, with motorcycles making up 30 percent of crashes in the four communities. 56 percent of motorcycle crashes in the four communities result in severe injury. The question of whether or not these riders are locals or visitors was brought up.

The direct impact of these crashes on the communities that are experiencing a high volume of motorcycle crashes involving riders from other areas is that it is taxing on the volunteer firefighters, and volunteer EMS, who have to respond to these crashes. These volunteers must take time from their regular paying jobs to respond to these crashes. The volunteers' ability to rapidly respond is not as quick as a city EMS's ability to respond to a similar crash if it happened inside the city. One member cited a four minute wait time on EMS arrival for in-city, and 45 minutes for response for rural crashes. Often times, the hospital charges get absorbed by the hospital, which place a burden on taxpayers, insurance companies, and insurance policy holders.

One feature of the rural toolkit is a heat map that identifies roads that have been categorized by a risk assessment which Dr. Manser presented briefly. Dr. Manser also provided details on the top five injury diagnoses in the four communities. Hospital charges were also presented.

## Update on Motorcycle Campaign – Props

Sherry Robelia of TxDOT presented TxDOT's outreach campaign that uses the Look Twice campaign materials from Sherry Matthews Advocacy Marketing. Robelia coordinates with the TxDOT Traffic Safety Specialists to set up events at dealerships, mostly at Harley-Davidsons. Police motorcycle officers have attended these events and demonstrated their riding skills. In the Bryan-College Station area, the events have been at one of the hospitals, a baseball game, and the Harley-Davidson shop.

The materials displayed are signs developed by Sherry Matthews, a photo booth backdrop, and a giant inflatable motorcycle, all with the Look Twice logo. Game cards, bumper stickers, smaller stickers, and posters are passed out. Attendees are encouraged to take photos and share them on social media pages. Robelia also presented a PSA that features tips for motorists to help them share the road with motorcycles. The PSA will be sent out to driver's ed schools as well as the TxDOT website.

## Gear Up PSA

Sam Haynes from TTI presented three "Geared Up, Torn Up?" PSA videos. These videos are created by TTI as part of their grant with TxDOT. The videos show various clips of riders crashing without motorcycle gear. The videos will be available on TTI's YouTube page, as well as

LookLearnLive.org and Look Learn Live social media once all videos have been released on social media. Sam encouraged Coalition members to share the videos.

## Feedback on Future Outreach Booth Materials

Dr. Manser began the conversation by explaining how NHTSA has changed their rules to no longer allow federal funding to go towards purchasing hand-out materials. TTI's campaign now has to identify innovative ways to get people into the booths to discuss motorcycle safety. Christie Havemann, TTI, discussed events that the campaign usually attends. Havemann explained how a few events the campaign normally attends were canceled last minute. The group discussed various events that the campaign could attend. Recommendations ranged from the State Fair, to smaller community events like First Fridays and art/market days in town squares. The Tomball Catfish festival, Clear Lake Lunar Fest, drag races/drag shows, the Plano Balloon Fest, and college sporting events were brought up.

Ideas for campaign materials were motorcycle racing simulators/racing games to get people to come in and race each other. The development of an app that has participants snap photos of motorcycles hidden throughout the venue was also brought up. The app would link to their Facebook page, and participants can compete against each other to see who can get the most motorcycles. Christie expressed a preference for appealing to children, because when kids get excited and want to come to the booth, their parents come. A coalition member added that it has the extra benefit of indoctrinating the next generation of drivers.

Another idea was creation of a prank check that has the cost of a motorcycle crash (hospital bills, missed work). Dr. Manser gauged interest in asking for donations of freebies from individuals or companies. The idea of asking pop-up emergency rooms to sponsor freebies was brought up. Having a free phone charging station was also brought up.

The recent event flyers designed by TTI Communications were presented to the group.

## Open Discussion/Adjourn

### Questions that were raised:

- Do automatic cars detect motorcycles? The group discussed automatic vehicle capabilities, and answered the question with a resounding "Yes".
- Mike Manser asked what months work best for the TMSC meetings. December was brought up as a challenge. January was given a preference, as was the first day and last day of the month.
- David Bryant asked if anyone had any requests or drafts for legislation to be addressed by ABATE. Jude Schexnyder answered that he had a lane splitting bill he could pass along. The question will Texas adopt lane splitting in the wake of California passing it

was asked. Jude answered that the real question is whether or not motorist behavior would change. Lane splitting is something he thinks that can be visited once traffic filtering becomes a widely accepted practice. Lane splitting was discussed further by the group, mostly led by Jude.

- The last question asked was if a roadway design engineer could come and speak in the future. This led to a conversation on potential speakers. Ideas included EMS; LEO; and an expert on connected vehicle.

The meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.