



Texas Motorcycle Safety Coalition Meeting Minutes June 22, 2017

Texas A&M Transportation Institute

Gibb Gilchrist Building, Room 102

10:00 am - 3:00 pm

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Opening Remarks/ Welcome New Members

TMSC Chair Chris Beiries opened the discussion by introducing himself and welcoming new and returning members. All attendees went around the table and introduced themselves. In attendance were members from the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS), various motorcycle training companies, the Texas A&M University Police Department, dealerships, the Federal Highway Administration, and various motorcycle riding clubs and organizations. Attendees traveled from Corpus Christi, Dallas, Fort Worth, Houston, Austin, San Antonio, as well as smaller towns such as Allen and Huntsville. There was a notable amount of first-time attendees in attendance for this meeting.

Texas Motorcycle Safety Forum Discussion & Evaluation: Increasing Attendance & Future Speakers

Mike Manser, of the Texas A&M Transportation Institute (TTI), began discussing the 2017 Texas Motorcycle Safety Forum by addressing the low attendance numbers. He spoke to the challenge of having over 100 registrations for the Forum, but a substantial amount of no-shows. Manser asked the group to identify ways to boost attendance. One attendee self-identified as someone who registered and didn't show up. She noted that she did not receive any reminder emails for the Forum, as she did with reminders for the current Coalition meeting. Long time coalition member, Wes Barker, brought up that increased traffic to the LookLearnLive.Org website will help increase attendance to the Forum. He recommended developing a designated page on LookLearnLive.Org for various motorcycle events across the state. Nina Saint, SafeWay Driving, recommended bringing in driver education licensing instructors, who have to possess a certain amount continuing education hours. The Forum could serve as an opportunity to the over 2,000 instructors across the state to receive some of their mandated continuing education hours.

Other recommendations included imposing a minimum registration fee, advertising the event to independent riders, adjusting and updating social media and website marketing efforts specifically to attract "the common biker" who are not involved in safety stakeholder groups, and creating paper brochures or flyers to give to dealerships to distribute. There was strong vocal support from attendees to host the event on a Saturday instead of on a weekday. Another idea that was vocalized was to host the Forum in different cities, rotating each year. Tyler, San Antonio, Waco, or a smaller community in between bigger cities, were all recommended. Live streaming the Forum was recommended, which was pursued for the first time this year. Connecting with TxDOT's Traffic Safety Specialists to market the Forum and promote the Coalition was also recommended. Jude Schexnyder, TxDOT, recommended that coalition members join TxDOT coalitions to serve as a voice for motorcyclists.

Texas DPS Motorcycle Safety Unit Update

John Young, DPS Motorcycle Safety Unit, began by providing a legislative update regarding funding for DPS's program. Governor Abbott vetoed the dedicated funding for FY19 that the Motorcycle Safety Unit relies on. The funding falls into a larger umbrella of safety endeavors that were proposed to have several million dollars. One member inquired what the funding is used for. John Young answered by explaining that a law was passed that takes \$5 from license renewal fees and allocates it to dedicated funding for the specific purpose of motorcycle safety. The funding was changed to general appropriations and is continued to be collected, totaling up to roughly \$14 million. Eventually, it was transitioned back to dedicated funding and the unit has been actively asking to spend it on motorcycle safety and training related efforts, such as purchasing new motorcycles for training, purchasing textbooks, etc. Since the funding has been vetoed, efforts to defray the cost of the program will not be accomplished. From previous funding, the unit will be able to purchase three new trucks, and 100+ motorcycles to be used on training ranges. John Young voiced a desire to have a committee developed to guide the future of the Motorcycle Safety Unit. The committee cannot be developed as a party of the coalition, due to the coalition's restricted involvement in legislative affairs. The kinds of questions the future committee will hopefully address will be:

- What should the price for a basic rider course be
- Does the program need to be revamped?
- Should the Motorcycle Safety Unit exist solely as a regulatory agency?

John Young asked interested parties to connect with him outside of the coalition meeting to begin to establish the proposed committee.

Lunch & Impaired Motorcycle Simulator Demos

During lunch, representatives from Texas A&M AgriLife's Watch Ur BAC program had their impaired motorcycle simulator available for rides. The simulator and impaired riding outreach efforts are new areas of the program, funded by a TxDOT grant. The simulator is available for events across the state.

Motorcycle Safety in Florida

Dr. Chanyoung Lee, of the Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR) at the University of South Florida, joined the group via WebEx to present his work in the field of motorcycle safety in Florida. Dr. Lee leads CUTR's motorcycle safety program, which is made up of engineers, researchers, rider coaches, and riders. Dr. Lee presented nationwide trends on motorcycle fatalities from 1975 to 2015, including fatalities by age and proportion of motorcycle fatalities in all traffic fatalities. The national average is 13 – 14 percent, but Florida's percentage of motorcycle fatalities account for 20 percent of all traffic fatalities.

Dr. Lee presented Florida-specific statistics and facts, such as the fact that younger Florida riders have a higher crash rate, followed by riders belonging to the Baby Boomer generation. One issue in Florida that Dr. Lee brought up is that roadway systems are not designed with motorcyclists in mind. Dr. Lee spoke to the importance of understanding that passenger vehicle fatalities have been decreasing over the years as vehicle registration has remained constant. However, motorcycle fatalities have increased by 5% while motorcycle registrations increased by 45% from 2009 and 2015.

Dr. Lee ended his presentation by discussing the specific programs that he and his team work on. One grant provides funding for all motorcycle safety efforts, of which 30 percent goes toward a safety coalition and a yearly event, much like our own Texas Motorcycle Safety Coalition and Statewide Motorcycle Safety Forum. Sixty percent of the grant goes towards paid media campaigns with share the road, anti-speeding, and sober riding messages that are increased during Daytona Bike Week, Biketoberfest, and during the general summer riding season. Ten percent of the grant goes towards program evaluation.

Motorcycle Strategic Action Plan Review

Mike Manser, TTI, began the Strategic Action Plan (SAP) working session by introducing some motorcycle-related statistics. Motorcycle registrations have doubled in 13 years, and Texas experienced a small increase in rider fatalities from 2015 to 2016. Some key contributing factors are intoxicated riding, lack of proper motorcycle gear, lack of proper licensing and training. To combat these issues, the SAP presents several countermeasures. For this working

session, Coalition members and attendees divided into groups to identify specific ways to meet one of the SAP countermeasures: “communicate rider responsibility (i.e. not speeding, appropriate following distance, lane placement).”

Part 1 of the working session consisted of everyone breaking up into six different groups and identifying ideas for meeting the countermeasure. During this, TMSC members were asked to develop two or three ways to communicate rider responsibility. They were not asked to specify details, but only to come up with a general idea for a way to meet the countermeasure. Each group presented their ideas, and each TMSC member used a piece of paper to vote for their top three ideas that were presented according to which ideas they felt were the strongest, and the best way to meet the countermeasure. Six ideas were identified through voting:

1. Insurance companies adopt requirement of having an endorsement for coverage
2. Public campaign focused on situational awareness aimed at younger riders.
3. Mandate continued education for license renewal.
4. Incentivize safe riding.
5. Develop an interactive virtual reality.
6. Encourage clubs to push for advanced training.

Part 2 of the working session involved the Coalition splitting up into six groups corresponding with the top six countermeasure ideas identified. In their groups, they discussed various aspects of their idea. The goal was to develop details on how their respective ideas could be facilitated. Lead organizations, steps to implementation, and other details were discussed by smaller groups. After 30 minutes, the groups reconvened as one, and a representative from each of the six groups presented their ideas. A more detailed and thorough review of their ideas will be emailed out to all Coalition members and is available upon request.

The working session allowed for a diverse set of motorcycle safety stakeholders to collaborate on ways to achieve rider responsibility. One goal of these working sessions is to host them at more coalition meetings, resulting in a variety of specific ways to meet the established countermeasures presented in the Motorcycle Strategic Action Plan.

Open Discussion and Adjourn

Open discussion began with a question about helmet-use amongst club riders. Coalition members self-reported that about 50 percent of clubs they are aware of have helmet-use policies.

One TMSC member brought up roadway fixtures with lights on them, and cited FM 1489 that has a chevron that lights up to assist riders (and drivers) in navigating a curve as an example. Some members and attendees voiced favorable opinions of the lighted chevrons, while some expressed concern that it could hinder a rider's ability to look through the turn.

The question of whether or not children are allowed on motorcycles was brought up.

The meeting officially adjourned at 3:11pm.