

Identifying Barriers to Understanding Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Laws

Pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities have increased significantly in Texas, largely attributable to a lack of law awareness and noncompliance with safety laws.

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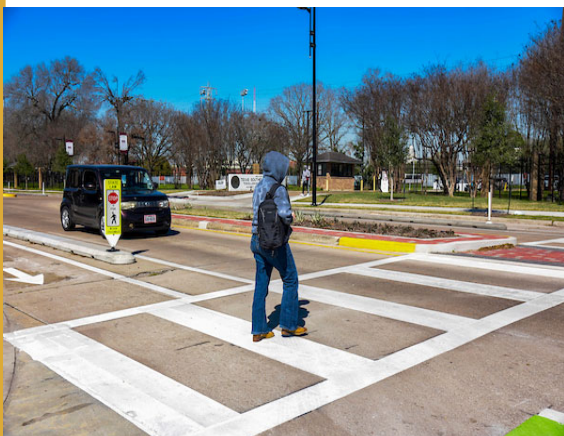


Project Need and Approach

In 2020, 6,516 pedestrians and 938 bicyclists were killed in motor vehicle crashes in the United States, reflecting a 51 and 50 percent increase since 2010, respectively. Notably, pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities have increased significantly in Texas, accounting for a substantial share of national fatalities. A lack of law awareness and noncompliance with safety laws are key factors contributing to these fatalities. The importance of improving public knowledge and behavior regarding pedestrian and bicycle safety laws is emphasized by both state and national traffic safety initiatives. To address this issue, the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) has identified the need to improve awareness and compliance among Texas road users.

To respond to the need for a project that informs “motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists of state laws applicable to pedestrian and bicycle safety laws,” the Texas A&M Transportation Institute (TTI) continued the Identifying Barriers to Understanding Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Laws project. This project’s approach involves identifying barriers to understanding pedestrian and bicycle safety laws through surveys and focus groups. A key aspect of this approach is the development and distribution of supplemental curriculum and videos to driver education companies, as well as the engagement of stakeholders to integrate these resources into existing education frameworks. By identifying gaps in knowledge and providing targeted education, the project sought to enhance public safety and reduce fatalities.

As part of this project, educational materials were distributed, focus groups and surveys were used to assess Texans' knowledge, and statewide coalition meetings were held to obtain stakeholder input to support the ultimate goal of reducing pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities in Texas.



Project Activities

The project included multiple activities aimed at improving public education on pedestrian and bicycle safety laws. A key activity was the distribution of educational materials—supplemental curriculum and videos—to 10 driver education companies. Additionally, the project team conducted focus groups with driver education stakeholders to discuss incorporating these materials into driver education curricula. These sessions provided valuable feedback and allowed for the refinement of the educational approach.

A survey of 401 Texans was conducted to assess public knowledge and behavior regarding pedestrian and bicycle safety laws. This survey provided data on the effectiveness of current education efforts and helped identify specific areas where awareness and compliance needed improvement. The project team also attended statewide coalition meetings to share findings and promote further collaboration on safety initiatives.

Benefits to Texas Transportation Safety

Increasing awareness of pedestrian and bicycle safety laws among Texas residents and driver education providers is key to reducing fatalities and improving road user behavior. Through this project, TTI tracked behavior, obstacles, and knowledge regarding pedestrian and bicycle safety, as well as identified the key areas missing from driver education curricula in Texas. Through enhanced education efforts, safety initiatives were disseminated to a wider Texas audience, supporting TxDOT's mission of improving safety and reducing traffic-related deaths.

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