

Street Coaching for Pedestrians and Cyclists: Putting Laws into Practice on University Campuses

Addressing pedestrian/bicycle safety on college campuses is important due to the dynamic nature of campus life, where students and staff constantly navigate shared spaces.



Authors

Troy Walden
TTI Senior Research Scientist

Emmaline Shields
TTI Associate Transportation
Researcher

Project Need and Approach

In the United States, pedestrian and bicyclist crashes and fatalities have been rising steadily since 2009, with notable increases in 2021. In Texas, pedestrian and bicyclist deaths accounted for one in five of all traffic fatalities in 2021, with 824 pedestrian and 90 bicyclist fatalities. Safety officials attribute the upward trend to people's widespread failure to follow state pedestrian and bicycle laws (e.g., failing to yield and crossing at locations not designated for crossing), driver inattention, and speeding. While fatal and serious injury crashes involving pedestrians and bicyclists are usually reported, less serious and near-miss crashes typically are not. Underreported crashes are a barrier to making streets safer for bicyclists and pedestrians. This lack of reporting results in lost data that could be used to inform safety stakeholders about contributing factors that lead to unsafe driving, walking, or biking behaviors. College campuses pose unique challenges due to their dense mix of motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists. College-age individuals (aged 18–24) are more prone to risky behaviors such as distracted walking or biking and failing to observe traffic laws.

To address the need for improved pedestrian and bicyclist safety on university campuses, the Texas A&M Transportation Institute (TTI) created a comprehensive strategy that included education, awareness-raising, and law enforcement engagement. The project team conducted crash analyses, held focus groups, and created a strategic safety plan tailored to high-need areas. Stakeholder collaboration was central, with an advisory committee guiding outreach and enforcement strategies. Deliverables included training programs, educational pocket guides, and a mobilization plan to sustain safety efforts.

This project aimed to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety by engaging students, staff, and law enforcement on a large university campus to increase awareness of existing pedestrian and bicycle laws.



In Texas, pedestrian and bicyclist deaths accounted for one in five of all traffic fatalities in 2021, with 824 pedestrian and 90 bicyclist fatalities.

DATA

What do bicyclist and/or pedestrian involved crashes look like near Texas Southern University?



An analysis of pedestrian and bicyclist crash data from the Texas Southern University campus showed that from 2018 to 2022, there were 101 pedestrian or bicyclist involved crashes that were reported.

Project Activities

The project employed a data-driven approach to enhance pedestrian and bicycle safety on a university campus in Texas. An analysis of pedestrian and bicycle crashes at Texas Southern University was conducted using selection criteria based on the Texas Department of Transportation's Crash Records Information System database to identify high-incident areas. Two focus group meetings with university stakeholders provided valuable insights into safety issues, which were incorporated into a technical memorandum outlining key findings and recommendations. An advisory committee was established to guide the development of treatment options for improving pedestrian and bicyclist safety. The committee also contributed to refining educational outreach materials and self-directed learning courses, with their insights incorporated into the technical memorandum.

The project also focused on the development and distribution of safety materials, including three pocket guides that addressed motor vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian safety practices. These guides were distributed to students, staff, law enforcement, and visitors on campus. A customized pedestrian and bicycle safety training program was created for university-based organizations, and a technical memorandum documenting the training was produced. To ensure long-term sustainability, the project also developed a campus-wide mobilization plan that included safety countermeasures, traffic law enforcement activities, and event-specific safety initiatives. This plan was shared with university traffic safety administrators and campus law enforcement to promote continued collaboration and safety efforts beyond the project's conclusion.

Benefits to Texas Transportation Safety

By providing for the continuation of traffic safety improvements on university campuses, TTI's Center for Transportation Safety (CTS) promoted and provided solutions to university partners in their quest to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety. Participation also enabled CTS to share the program with other states and emphasized the importance of addressing bicycle and pedestrian safety on university campuses where the risk of crashes is high.

Funding and Support

This project was funded through a grant by the Texas Department of Transportation Behavioral Traffic Safety Program.

The Texas A&M Transportation Institute Center for Transportation Safety provided match funding support.

For More Information

Emmaline Shields

Associate Transportation Researcher
Center for Transportation Safety
1111 RELIS Parkway
Bryan, TX 77807-3135
(979) 317-2898
e-shields@tti.tamu.edu

Publication date: 2024