

Traffic Safety Practices in U.S. Cities: Survey and Focus Group Results

This project entails a survey of the safety practices of the 150 largest cities in the United States, as well as a focus group of representatives from 10 cities at the forefront of traffic safety.

It finds that cities view themselves as prioritizing safety more heavily than state departments of transportation or metropolitan planning organizations, though the focus of city safety concerns lies principally in addressing the needs of pedestrians and cyclists.

Further, while many cities have adopted high-level policy goals relating to traffic safety, comparatively few have translated them into formal mechanisms that guide the design and construction of municipal transportation projects. Instead, city safety activities tend to concentrate on programs aimed at pedestrians and cyclists, such as pedestrian and bicycle master plans, complete streets policies, and safe routes to schools programs.

While these programs may increase the comfort of pedestrians and cyclists, it remains unclear whether they translate into improved safety outcomes.

This study concludes by encouraging safety researchers and professionals to better link safety practices to broader municipal concerns about land valuation and quality-of-life, and to translate this knowledge into actionable policies that can be integrated into the project development processes used by cities.

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