



Understanding Shared Beliefs about Pedestrian Safety and Sharing Tools to Support Pedestrian Safety Efforts

Project Title: Resources and Tools to Improve Pedestrian Safety

Montana Department of Transportation
in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration



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TPF- 5(444) Pooled Fund Sponsoring agencies: California DOT, Connecticut DOT, Georgia DOT, Idaho Transportation Department, Montana DOT, Illinois DOT, Indiana DOT, Iowa DOT, Kansas DOT, Kentucky DOT, Louisiana DOT and Development, Michigan DOT, Minnesota DOT, Mississippi DOT, Nevada DOT, Texas DOT, Utah DOT, Vermont Agency of Transportation, and Washington State DOT



Recommended Citation:

Finley, K., Otto, J., Green, K., Hanson, B., Arpin, J., & Hamre, A. (2024). *Resources and tools to improve pedestrian safety*. Bozeman, MT: Center for Health and Safety Culture. Montana State University.

Agenda

- Project Overview
- Findings from a Survey of Traffic Safety Stakeholders
- Resources and Tools



Pedestrian fatalities from motor vehicle crashes have increased since 2009.

Transportation stakeholders are uniquely positioned to lead efforts to improve pedestrian safety.

Insurance Institute for Highway Safety. (2022b, May). *Fatality Facts 2020: Pedestrians*.

<https://www.iihs.org/topics/fatality-statistics/detail/pedestrians>

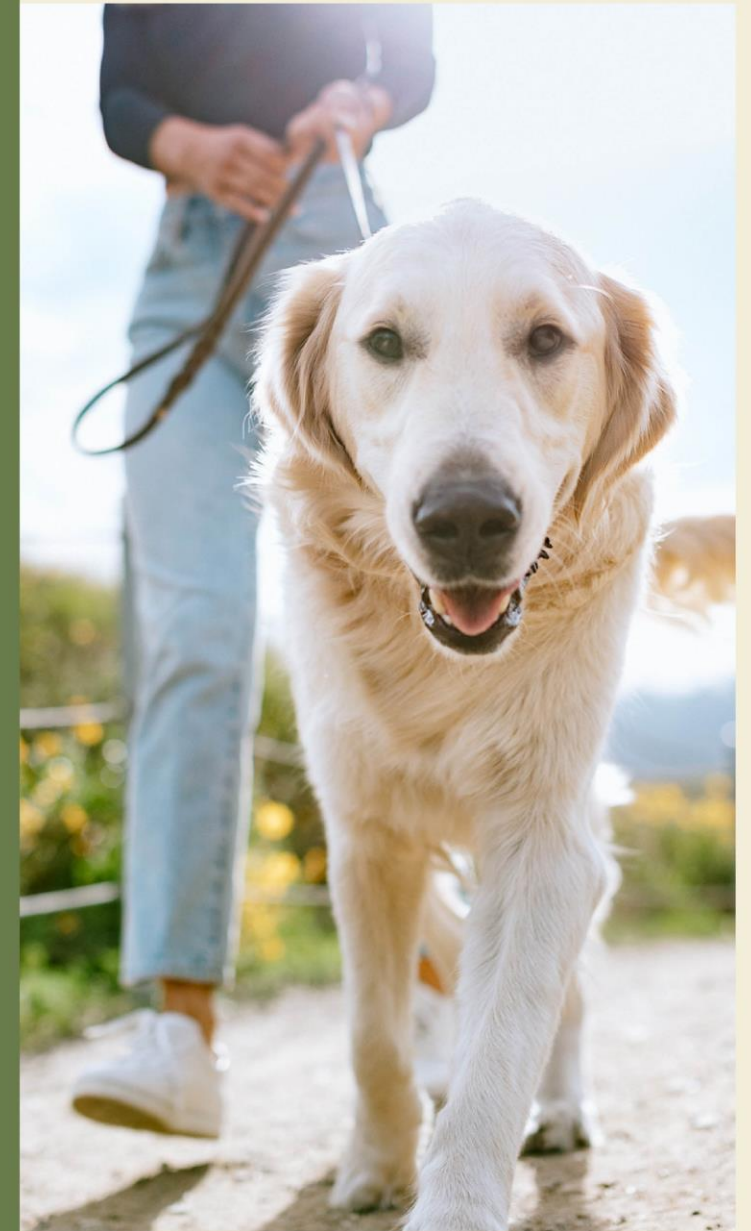
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. (2021). *Traffic Safety Facts 2019: A compilation of motor vehicle crash data* (DOT HS 813-141).

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. (2022a). *Traffic Safety Facts—2020 Data: Pedestrians* (DOT HS 813 310). U.S. Department of Transportation National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

<https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813310>

Project Goals


- Understand shared values and beliefs among transportation stakeholders about pedestrian safety.
- Develop resources and tools to assess and grow beliefs among transportation stakeholders to support the implementation of effective pedestrian safety strategies.



Findings from a Survey of Traffic Safety Stakeholders

Purpose: Reveal beliefs about pedestrian safety and traffic safety stakeholders' understanding, support for, and engagement in strategies

- **Recruitment:** The Traffic Safety Culture Pooled Fund Members were asked to reach out to stakeholders in their states (i.e., State DOT employees (leaders, engineers, behavioral safety), city/county DOT/public works employees (engineers, planners), metropolitan and rural planning organization (MPO/RPO) employees, public health people working on traffic safety/injury prevention, pedestrian advocacy groups and anyone they felt has an interest and stake in pedestrian safety.
- Conducted online between Sept. 19, 2023 and Oct. 19, 2023
- 336 surveys were included in data analysis



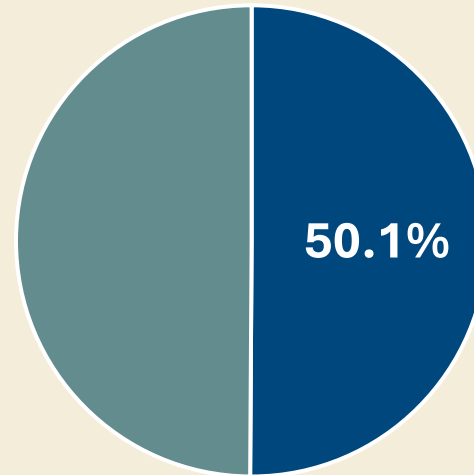
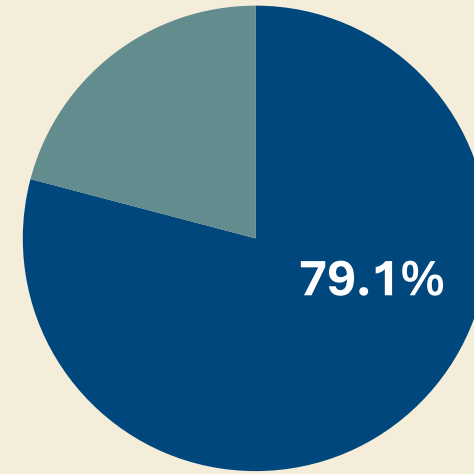
The survey of stakeholders was designed to focus on these topics:

- **Prioritization of pedestrian safety**
- **Beliefs about a Safe System Approach for pedestrians**
- **Current approaches to pedestrian safety**
- **Familiarity, support for, and use of best practices to improve pedestrian safety**
- **Getting public input**
- **Use of the Complete Streets approach**
- **Valued resources used by practitioners**

Results – Prioritization of Pedestrian Safety

Most respondents (79.1%) indicated that, based on what their organization **says**, the safety of pedestrians was a high (or the highest) priority.

- However, when asked based on what their organization **does**, only half (50.1%) reported the safety of pedestrians was a high (or the highest) priority.

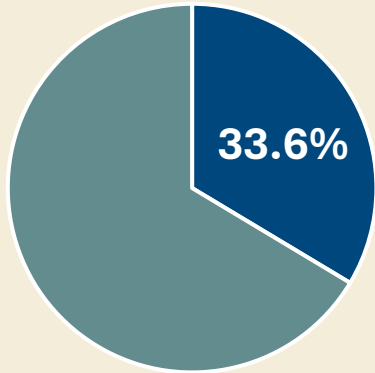


Results – Prioritization of Pedestrian Safety

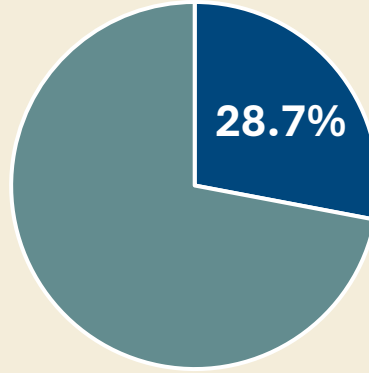
Organization	Percentage indicating pedestrian safety was a high (or highest) priority
State Department of Transportation (DOT)	47.6
Municipal Planning Organizations (MPOs) or Rural Planning Organizations (RPOs)	41.0
Local departments of transportation/public works	30.3

Results – Public Input

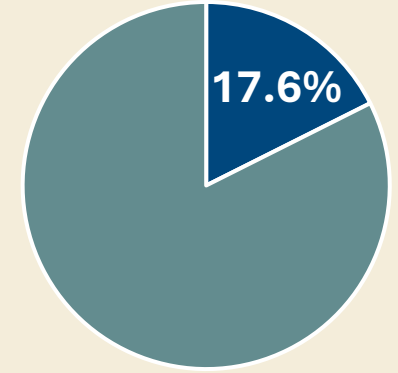
Few respondents indicated their own organization did very well or extremely well at getting public input.



33.6% indicated their organization does very or extremely well at **getting input from people who may be potentially impacted by changes to the roadway system before starting designs.**



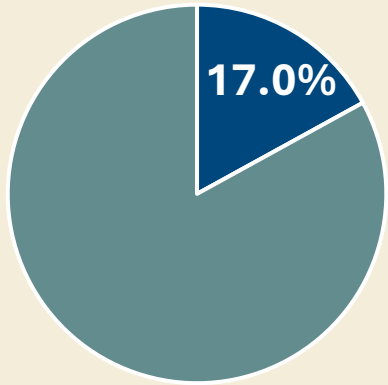
28.7% indicated their organization does very or extremely well at **getting feedback on designs.**



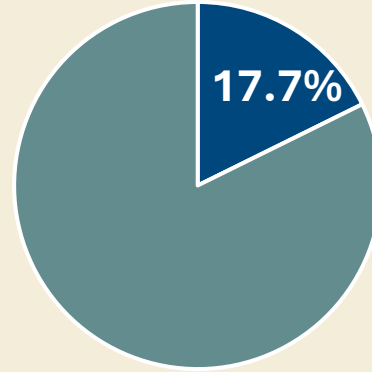
17.6% indicated their organization does very or extremely well at **trying small scale (sometimes temporary) changes so people can actually see and experience how a new design might work.**

Results – Public Input

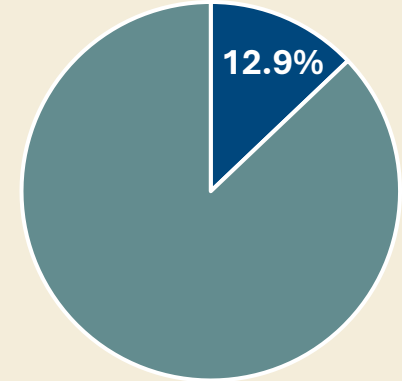
Few respondents perceived that their state DOT did very well or extremely well at getting public input.



17.0% indicated their state DOT does very or extremely well at getting input from people who may be potentially impacted by changes to the roadway system before starting designs.



17.7% indicated their organization does very or extremely well at getting feedback on designs.



12.9% indicated their organization does very or extremely well at trying small scale (sometimes temporary) changes so people can actually see and experience how a new design might work.

Recommendations

- There may be opportunities within organizations to clarify the discrepancy between the organization's espoused values (i.e., what they say are priorities) vs. actual practices regarding pedestrian safety. Exploring these discrepancies may increase practices that improve pedestrian safety.

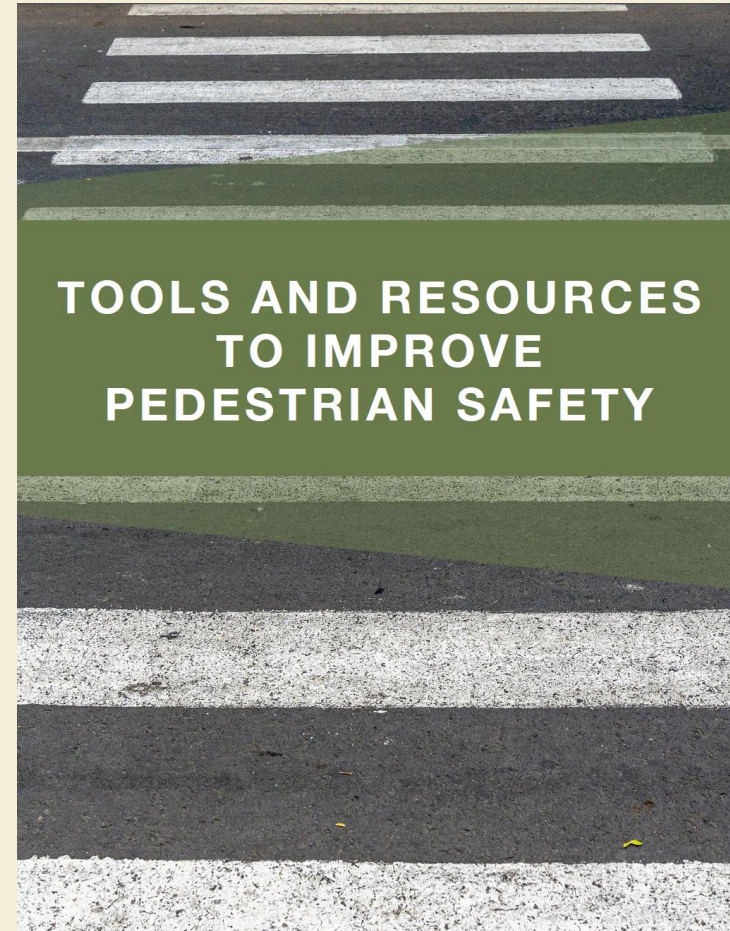
Recommendations

- Overall, respondents indicated relatively high levels of familiarity and perceptions of efficacy of nine best practices; however, they reported lower levels of perceived support by leadership for and use of these practices. There may be opportunities to increase use of these practices by growing supportive beliefs and clarifying expectations by leadership.

Resources and Tools



https://www.mdt.mt.gov/other/webdata/external/research/docs/research_proj/tsc/pedestrian_safety/Toolkit.pdf



Inside the toolkit...

The toolkit includes five tools and one resource.

- The resource focuses on growing public participation.
- The tools address:
 - growing supportive beliefs to improve pedestrian safety,
 - ways to prioritize pedestrian safety and bolster current approaches,
 - telling your pedestrian safety story,
 - engaging in meaningful conversations about pedestrian safety, and
 - promoting pedestrian safety across the social environment.

Resources and Tools



Table 1. Ways Stakeholders Can Contribute

STAKEHOLDER	WAYS TO USE THIS TOOL
State Departments of Transportation (planners, engineers, construction, maintenance), Highway Safety Offices	HSOs or others could convene stakeholders within the DOT to use the tool to identify opportunities to improve pedestrian safety. This could occur within a district/ regional office, at headquarters, or across the DOT. Engaging stakeholders representing planning, engineering, construction, and maintenance can help identify where pedestrian safety efforts may “get lost” during the lifecycle of a project.
Local Departments of Transportation/ Public Works (safety, planners, engineers, construction, maintenance)	Local DOTs could convene stakeholders within their organization and those outside their organization (like MPOs/RPOs, law enforcement, public health, etc.) as well as members of the public to identify opportunities to improve pedestrian safety.
Planning Organizations (Metropolitan Planning Organizations, Regional Planning Organizations, and Regional Transportation Planning Organizations)	Planning organizations may develop plans that improve pedestrian safety; however, there is a risk that, at some point in the lifecycle of the project, these ideas are changed or removed. A planning organization is an ideal entity to recruit a variety of stakeholders to use this tool and identify opportunities to improve pedestrian safety. By involving engineers, construction, and maintenance, actions to improve pedestrian safety are more likely to be sustained across the lifecycle.
Public Health	Public health can bring a unique perspective to pedestrian safety – considering it in the context of injury prevention as well as health promotion through active transportation. Sometimes, people outside of the immediate efforts to plan, design, and build the transportation system can shed new insights on issues and bring together new stakeholders.
Advocacy Organizations	Improving pedestrian safety may be a component of the mission of an advocacy organization. An advocacy organization could convene stakeholders at the local, regional, or state level to identify opportunities to improve pedestrian safety.





Conclusion

Transportation stakeholders are uniquely positioned to lead efforts to improve pedestrian safety.

Understanding shared values and beliefs about pedestrian safety among transportation stakeholders is critical to growing a positive traffic safety culture, implementing effective strategies to improve pedestrian safety, and ultimately achieving our nation's goal of zero deaths on our roadways.

Contact Information

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