

## **Breakout 5: Safety Planning**

*Moderator:* Jeff Kaufman, Houston-Galveston Area Council

### Session Summary:

The three presenters in this session each covered a topic that is associated with traffic safety planning. Safety planning is not a widely covered topic in Texas with few exceptions. It could be said that the entire safety conference is an introduction to the various areas of safety planning that should be considered for making Texas roads safer. This session addressed a few specific areas of interest, including the development of regional safety programs, the importance of data in safety planning, and the utilization of access management as an effective and relatively low-cost approach for addressing transportation safety at a time where large-scale infrastructure overhauls may be cost-prohibitive.

Sonya Jackson, of the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) opened the session with an overview of the NCTCOG Transportation Safety Program. The North Central Texas Council of Governments is one of two metropolitan planning organizations that have established a transportation safety program in Texas. Ms. Jackson presented a synopsis of the NCTCOG program and its focus areas, which include a freeway incident management training program, a regional mobility assistance patrol program, the development of a safety information system, a HazMat incident mapping project, and a MUTCD working group. A series of future safety initiatives by the group was also presented.

With the recent release of data from the Texas Department of Transportation's (TxDOT) Crash Record Information System (CRIS), TxDOT's Debra Vermillion gave a presentation on how TxDOT collects crash data and the importance of that data with regard to improving and enhancing safety on the state's roadways. She also addressed the importance of accurate crash reporting by law enforcement officers in order for data users to identify problem locations precisely and determine the best approach for improving those locations. Ms. Vermillion also provided information on how to request the new data from TxDOT.

In his presentation on access management and safety, Dr. Vergil Stover discussed Access Management Planning as a tool for improving safety on our roadways, especially in urban areas. Dr. Stover presented a variety of techniques for implementing access management and their associated benefits for reducing crashes. These techniques include turn bays, non-traversable medians, reduced traffic signal density, and consolidated access points. These approaches have shown significant improvements in safety at a lower cost of implementation.