For decades, traffic safety improvements have relied primarily upon engineering and enforcement solutions. If we are limited to those options, further improvements will be incremental at best. Truly meaningful advancements in safety will depend largely on changing the way we think about driving – changing our traffic safety culture. A survey by the Center for Transportation Safety at TTI measured Texas drivers' attitudes toward safety conditions and laws. A brief sample of findings shows that:

- More than a third of Texas drivers think the roadways are less safe than they were five years ago, and they also think that there have been increases in the number of drivers who are more likely to be aggressive and either talk or text on cell phones.
- Texans generally feel safer on the roads than drivers nationwide, as measured in the 2010 Traffic Safety Culture Index published by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety. In that survey, 52 percent of drivers nationwide said they feel less safe, while the number in Texas is 34 percent.
- More than 80 percent believe that cell phone use behind the wheel has become a bigger problem than it was five years ago; 60 percent say that texting while driving is worse.
- Well over half say aggressive driving is worse, and nearly half say the same thing about driver courtesy.
- Supporters of red light cameras outnumber opponents by nearly two to one.
- Supporters also outnumber opponents when it comes to the use of sobriety checkpoints to deter impaired driving, and also in requiring the use of ignition interlock devices for drivers with DWI convictions.
- Just over half favor a law that would prohibit any type of cell phone use while driving.
- Seven out of ten favor a law that would require all motorcyclists to wear helmets.
- Survey participants were generally opposed to raising the state’s gasoline tax to pay for new roads or to make the roads safer.

Complete results of the study can be found at http://tti.tamu.edu/group/cts/

CTS researchers plan to repeat the survey each year and publish its findings as part of the Center’s Legislative direction to “foster public awareness of the importance of roadway safety to the economy of this state.”