

# BETTER ROADS SAFER ROADS

## ADVANCING SAFETY

Through Roadway Technology





# BETTER ROADS SAFER ROADS

Fall 2024 | TxLTAP.org

## 01 THE METICULOUS TESTING THAT DRIVES TEXAS HIGHWAYS

At TxDOT's Materials and Testing Division (MTD), the team conducts essential tests to ensure all roadway materials meet strict standards.

### IMPLEMENTING THE SAFE SYSTEM APPROACH ON ROADWAYS

For practitioners working toward zero roadway fatalities through the implementation of the Safe System Approach (SSA), the FHWA Office of Safety released two new tools—one to assist with project selection, the other to help stakeholders assess their policies.

## 02 TxDOT FINALIZES BUYBACK OF SH 288

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) has completed the termination of the SH 288 Comprehensive Development Agreement (CDA).

## 03 SHORTER DAYS BRING HIGHER RISK FOR PEDESTRIANS

While fall and winter give Texans a much-needed reprieve from the summer heat, the change in seasons also brings fewer daylight hours, making it harder for drivers to see pedestrians and keep them safe.

## 04 BIDEN-HARRIS ADMINISTRATION ANNOUNCES MORE THAN \$96 MILLION IN ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY GRANTS TO IMPROVE SAFETY AND REDUCE TRAVEL TIMES

The U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) recently announced more than \$96.5 million in grants to 16 states for 20 projects.

## 05 BIDEN-HARRIS ADMINISTRATION ANNOUNCES NEARLY \$635 MILLION FOR 22 BRIDGE PROJECTS ACROSS THE COUNTRY

The U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) recently announced nearly \$635 million for 22 small and medium-sized bridge projects in both rural and urban areas.

## 08 TxDOT WARNING DRIVERS OF SPIKE IN TEXTING SCAMS TARGETING TXTAG CUSTOMERS

Texting scams are targeting toll customers in Texas saying they're from TxTag, and the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) is warning everyone to be on the lookout.

## 09 DOES A FULL MOON RAISE THE RISK OF VEHICLE COLLISIONS WITH WILDLIFE?

Workers who drive at night, take note: Vehicle-wildlife collisions may be almost 50% more likely to occur during a full moon, results of a recent study suggest.

## 10 VISION ZERO FOR YOUTH U.S. LEADERSHIP AWARD

The Vision Zero for Youth U.S. Leadership Award recognizes places that are taking bold steps to stop severe injuries and deaths among child and youth pedestrians and bicyclists.

## 11 NHTSA RFI ON PDO CRASH REPORTING AND DATA MANAGEMENT

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, has published a Request for Information on Property Damage Only crash reporting and data management.

## 12 GRANT AND FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Learn about new grant and funding opportunities open to application.

## 13 TxLTAP TRAINING & SERVICES

Contact TxLTAP for more information or to request training, services, or equipment.





# THE METICULOUS TESTING THAT DRIVES TEXAS HIGHWAYS

by Cynthia Vaquera

At TxDOT's Materials and Testing Division (MTD), the team conducts essential tests to ensure all roadway materials — concrete, asphalt, etc. — meet strict standards. “The test procedure is basically the recipe for how to bake a cake, except here we are running a test,” said Ryan Barborak, director of TxDOT's Materials and Testing Division.

A high level of consistency ensures high-quality results at all TxDOT labs across the state.

A key service offered by the labs is petrographic analysis, an advanced method used to identify why materials fail to meet industry standards.

Using advanced medical equipment, lab technicians can analyze microscopic particles that are invisible to the human eye, allowing them to assess material chemistry and provide crucial information to TxDOT engineers about defective materials.

Safety is a top priority for the division. From improving road sign reflectivity for better night visibility to ensuring pavement quality, MTD conducts tests that have a direct impact on driver safety.

“We test to ensure that by meeting specification requirements, we are ensuring safety on our TxDOT projects,” Barborak said. “Our



*Petrographer. (Source: GeoStructures.net)*

technicians and those performing the tests take great pride in what they do. And for that, I'm very thankful, to our staff here at the Materials and Testing Division.”

Thanks to their focus on testing, innovation and safety, MTD's dedicated team ensures that roads in Texas are durable and safe for everyone.

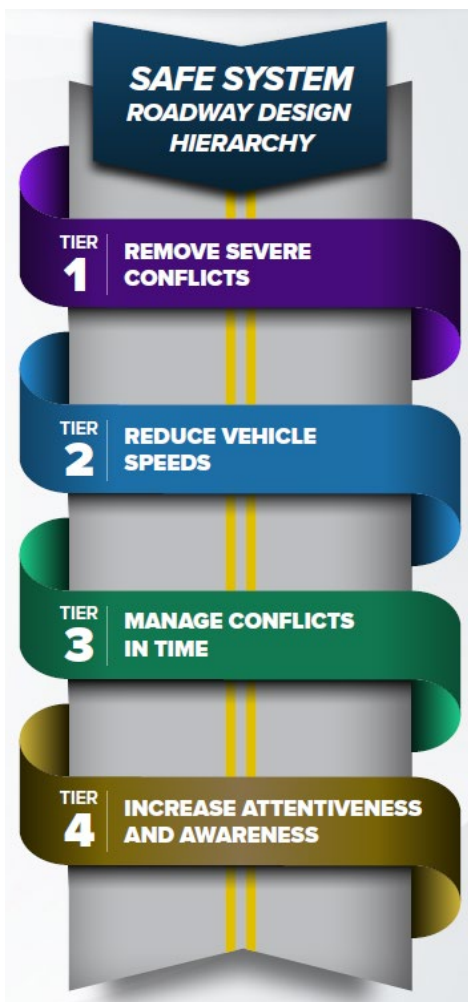
## IMPLEMENTING THE SAFE SYSTEM APPROACH ON ROADWAYS

For practitioners working toward zero roadway fatalities through the implementation of the Safe System Approach (SSA), the [FHWA Office of Safety released two new tools—one to assist with project selection, the other to help stakeholders assess their policies](#).

Each tool is formatted as a user-friendly spreadsheet, and both were developed through extensive research of national and international best practices for measuring their relative alignment with the Safe System Approach.

- **Safe System Project-Based Alignment Framework:** provides practitioners with a means of contrasting potential roadway improvements relative to one another through a quantitative scoring matrix and qualitative safety prompts.
- **Safe System Policy-Based Alignment Framework:** helps agencies assess policies, plans, processes, programs, and documents in a holistic manner through a Safe System lens.

These two resources are companions to the recent publication, Safe System Roadway Design Hierarchy: Engineering and Infrastructure-related Countermeasures to Effectively Reduce Roadway Fatalities and Serious Injuries (FHWA-SA-22-069). FHWA can provide workshops on the Safe System Design Hierarchy or on applying the Safe System Alignment Frameworks. [Learn more about these training opportunities](#).



*The Safe System Roadway Design Hierarchy. (Source: FHWA)*



# TXDOT FINALIZES BUYBACK OF SH 288



The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) has completed the termination of the SH 288 Comprehensive Development Agreement (CDA). This historic move is expected to bring Texans future toll relief and more free lanes to drive in the Houston area.

“This is an extraordinary outcome for Texans. Not only will this bring future toll relief and additional free general purpose lanes for drivers, but the state is acquiring a \$4 billion asset for \$1.7 billion,” said TxDOT Executive Director, Marc D. Williams. “This type of buy-out is unprecedented in the United States and is a very big win for SH 288 drivers and our taxpayers.”

Tolling policies on the SH 288 managed toll lanes in Harris County will not change in the short term, due to a contractually required transition period. However, by transferring the project to state control, TxDOT anticipates that future toll rates will be able to be reduced and will escalate at a slower pace than allowed under the CDA. TxDOT also anticipates that future toll revenues will be able to fund on-going and future maintenance on SH 288, along with improvements like additional non-tolled lanes on a portion of the SH 288 corridor.

The state will now assume operations. Drivers should not expect to see any immediate changes regarding maintenance, operations, or billing. TxDOT will continue to manage traffic in the lanes to a target minimum of 45 mph.

TxDOT believes the cost of the “buy-out” provision in the contract is substantially below the value of future toll revenues on the corridor—even with the anticipated future reduction in toll rates. The “buy-out” payment of \$1.7 billion is anticipated to be paid off with future toll revenue bonds (debt repaid by toll revenues), ensuring that other planned projects around Texas will proceed on schedule. This means the funds for the buy-out ultimately come from toll users.

TxDOT will begin plans to build two free general-purpose lanes along portions of SH 288 between IH 610 and Beltway 8 by no later than 2030 (one lane in each direction). Under the plan, the current six free general-purpose lanes in this area would widen to eight lanes, thereby matching the capacity that already exists north of IH 610 (four free lanes in each direction). These two additional free lanes are planned to be paid for by toll revenues.





# SHORTER DAYS BRING HIGHER RISK FOR PEDESTRIANS

While fall and winter give Texans a much-needed reprieve from the summer heat, the change in seasons also brings fewer daylight hours, making it harder for drivers to see pedestrians and keep them safe.

October was the deadliest month for pedestrians in 2023, with 80 pedestrians dying in Texas traffic crashes. It was also the month that Lisa Torry Smith was killed in a crash in 2017 as she was walking her 6-year-old son to kindergarten in Missouri City. A motorist drove through a crosswalk, hitting Lisa and leaving her son with a broken leg and fractured pelvis—and without a mother.

A new law in her honor now requires drivers to stop and yield the right of way to pedestrians in crosswalks. Lisa's sister, Gina Torry, is now advocating for pedestrian safety.

Sadly, Lisa's story is just one of many. Over the last five years, pedestrian traffic fatalities in Texas increased 22%, and the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) is reminding everyone to be extra cautious and alert.

"As the fall and winter months usher in shorter days and less light, pedestrians are at increased risk on our roads," TxDOT Executive Director Marc Williams said. "Drivers may struggle to see pedestrians in lower-light conditions and must stay alert to avoid preventable collisions. Likewise, pedestrians can take extra precautions to be seen by drivers when walking after dark."

TxDOT took to the streets with its Be Safe. Drive Smart. Campaign during October's National Pedestrian Safety Month, to remind drivers to slow down and watch for people walking.

TxDOT's educational campaign included TV and radio spots, billboards and digital advertising. TxDOT also brought 34

street teams - walking billboards wearing safety messages - to areas that saw the greatest number of pedestrian fatalities last year. The street teams were deployed in places where motorists and pedestrians share the road.

TxDOT encourages everyone to follow the safety tips below to prevent a deadly crash.

## FOR DRIVERS

- Stop and yield for pedestrians in crosswalks.
- When turning, yield the right of way to pedestrians.
- Put your phone away before you begin driving and pay attention so you're prepared if pedestrians enter your path.
- Be cautious when passing stopped buses or other vehicles that can block your view of pedestrians.
- Follow the posted speed limit and drive to conditions.

## FOR PEOPLE WALKING

- Cross the street only at intersections and crosswalks. Look left, right, then left again before crossing.
- Make eye contact with drivers before crossing. Don't assume traffic will stop for you.
- Follow all traffic and crosswalk signals.
- When walking, put away electronic devices that take your attention off the road.
- Stay visible. Wear reflective materials or use a flashlight at night.

*Be Safe. Drive Smart. is a key component of #EndTheStreakTX, a broader social media and word-of-mouth effort that encourages drivers to make safer choices while behind the wheel to help end the streak of daily deaths. Nov. 7, 2000, was the last deathless day on Texas roadways.*



# BIDEN-HARRIS ADMINISTRATION ANNOUNCES MORE THAN \$96 MILLION IN ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY GRANTS TO IMPROVE SAFETY AND REDUCE TRAVEL TIMES

The U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) recently announced more than \$96.5 million in grants to 16 states for 20 projects under the Advanced Transportation Technology and Innovation (ATTAIN) program. As part of President Biden's Investing in America agenda, the grants will fund technology-based and multimodal solutions that improve the travel experience for millions of Americans who use our highway and transit systems, including in disadvantaged communities that have lacked investment and resources.

"The Biden-Harris Administration continues to advance projects that are modernizing the transportation sector and improving access, efficiency, and safety for all travelers," said U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg. "With this latest round of funding, we're helping states across the country develop the innovative and multimodal solutions that will make travel on our highways and transit systems easier, safer, and more convenient."

The program promotes advanced technologies to improve safety and reduce travel times for drivers and transit riders that can serve as national examples of innovation to improve transportation options for all communities.

"These projects are a critical opportunity to invest in our future, by leveraging technology and innovation," noted Acting Federal Highway Administrator Kristin White. "These investments offer new and transformative transportation options, including communities who have lacked efficient and affordable means of transportation."

Examples of projects selected to receive funding include the following:

- The California Department of Transportation will receive \$5.6 million for its Interoperable Vehicle-to-Everything and connected vehicle infrastructure.
- Hillsborough County in Florida will receive \$2.96 million to integrate smart traffic technology to improve safety, mobility, and connected vehicle readiness along 40-miles of arterial streets within Hillsborough County.
- The City of Cedar Park in Texas will receive \$4.42 million to address traffic congestion and enhance road user safety through the rapid deployment of advanced transportation technology – including, Vehicle-to-Everything (V2X) communication and Artificial Intelligence (AI) applications.

Overall, the 20 selected projects will help advance Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) technologies that improve mobility and safety. The projects include state-of-the-art systems – including signal timing that works with transit and light rail, pedestrian and intersection safety, trip planning and ITS traffic



*"With this latest round of funding, we're helping states across the country develop the innovative and multimodal solutions that will make travel on our highways and transit systems easier, safer, and more convenient."*

- U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg

management. Earlier this year the Department announced the [Saving Lives with Connectivity: A Plan to Accelerate V2X Deployment](#). This plan will guide the implementation of vehicle-to-everything technologies across the nation and support USDOT's commitment to pursue a comprehensive approach to reduce the number of roadway fatalities to zero.

The full list of ATTAIN grant selections can be found at [ops.fhwa.dot.gov/bipartisan-infrastructure-law/index.htm](https://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/bipartisan-infrastructure-law/index.htm).





# BIDEN-HARRIS ADMINISTRATION ANNOUNCES NEARLY \$635 MILLION FOR 22 BRIDGE PROJECTS ACROSS THE COUNTRY

The U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) recently announced nearly \$635 million for 22 small and medium-sized bridge projects in both rural and urban areas, from Maine to Mississippi to Arizona and Alaska. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law dedicates \$40 billion over five years to tackle a backlog of bridge projects, which will improve safety and support economic competitiveness and America's supply chains, restoring connections that are vital to commuters, emergency responders, truck drivers, and public transit riders.

"Under the Biden-Harris Administration, more than 11,000 bridges in communities across America are finally getting the repairs they've long needed with funding from our infrastructure law," said U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg. "With the awards we're announcing, another 22 major projects will move forward, making sure that people and goods can get where they need to go, safely and efficiently."

"Part of FHWA's core mission is to connect communities, which includes the 22 bridge projects we're funding across America under our bridge investment program," said Acting Federal Highway Administrator Kristin White. "This infrastructure is

critical to safely get people to where they need to go and to support our nation's economy by advancing efficient delivery of goods."

President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law established the Bridge Investment Program, a historic effort to ensure America's bridges are safe and operational, meet current and future traveler needs, support local economies, strengthen supply chains to keep costs down for consumers, and create good-paying jobs across the country. More than 11,000 bridges are being rebuilt, repaired, or modernized thanks to President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. To date, the Bridge Investment Program has invested \$8.1 billion into 100 bridge projects in 44 states across the country, and an additional \$21 billion in dedicated bridge formula funds – the full amount provided by BIL over 2022-2025 – has been distributed to states.

Applicants requested a total of \$3.68 billion of which \$3 billion remains unfunded under the program. Below are the Bridge Investment Program "Other Than Large" Fiscal Year 2024 projects:

*Continued on page 6.*



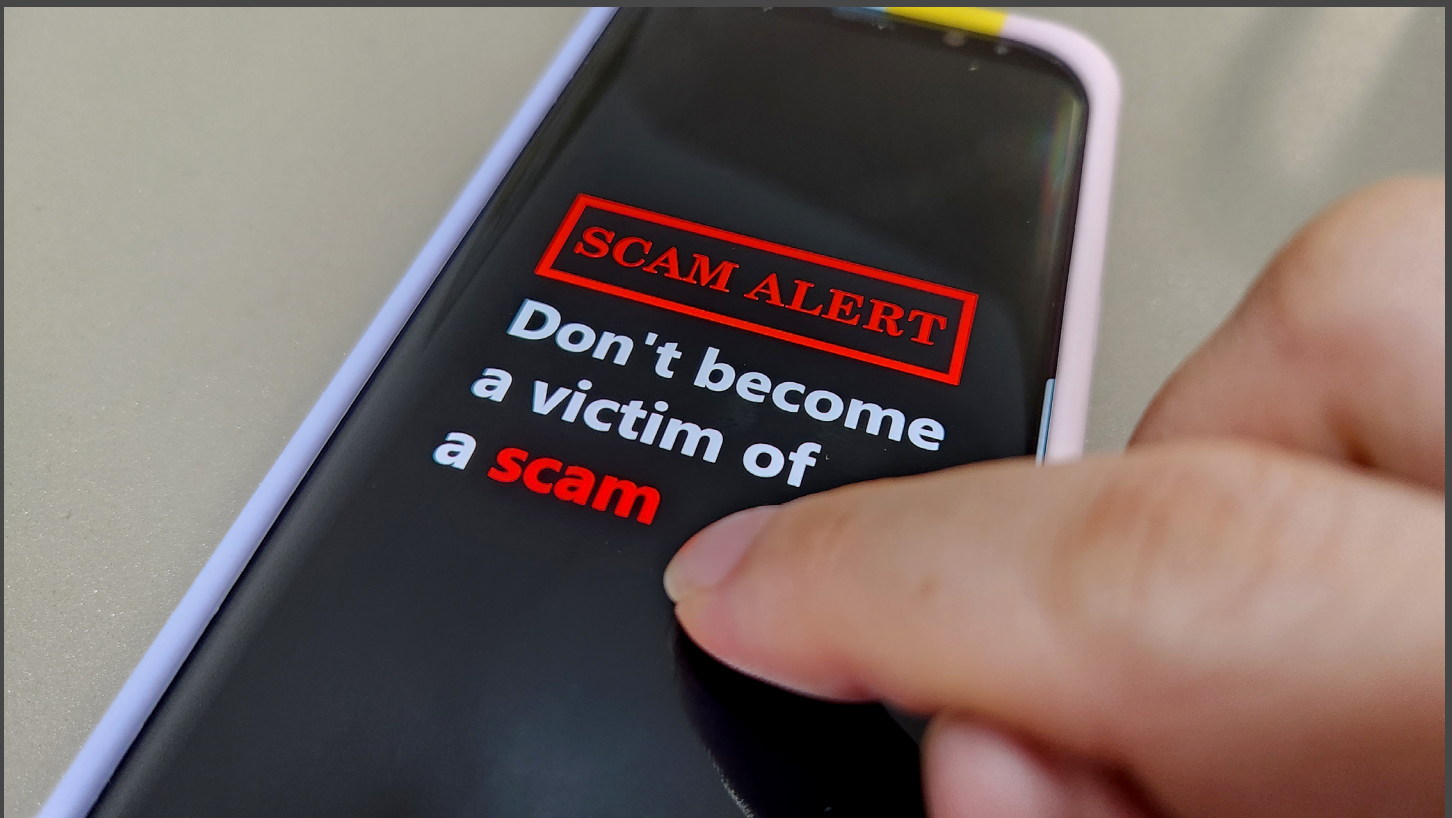
- **ARKANSAS AND MISSISSIPPI:** \$43,920,000 to the Arkansas Department of Transportation for the Helena Bridge Rehabilitation project. The aging Helena Bridge carries U.S. Route 49 across the Mississippi River between Helena, Arkansas and Lula, Mississippi, and supports movement of freight and significant quantities of agricultural commodities from the Mississippi Delta, one of the most productive farming regions in the country. The Helena Bridge is also the only Mississippi River crossing for a 105-mile stretch – if not operable, diverted traffic and freight would add nearly three hours to their commutes.
- **COLORADO:** \$13,713,060 to the City of Pueblo for the Union Ave Bridge Replacement project. The project will replace the near century old Union Avenue Bridge, a critical link from downtown Pueblo to South Pueblo. The bridge will be reconstructed to include pedestrian and bicycle facilities and to accommodate future intercity passenger rail.
- **IOWA:** \$6 million to the City of Cedar Rapids for the Arc of Justice Bridge Replacement project that will support the replacement of the Eighth Avenue bridge – originally built in 1938 – over the Cedar River. The project will improve the movement of people and goods throughout the area by making the area more resilient to flooding. All seven bridges carrying local traffic over the Cedar River in and around downtown, including the current 8th Avenue bridge, are closed at the 25-year flood event and above. In the last 20 years, the Cedar River reached or exceeded that event 15 times. This leads to lengthy detours and delays for residents and freight movement, affecting regional supply chains. The new bridge will provide 10-feet of low chord clearance above the 100-year flood elevation to ensure the bridge stays open during flooding events.
- **IOWA:** \$38,640,000 to Washington County for the Building Bridges Today Helping Feed America Tomorrow project that will remove and replace seven bridges in poor condition in six rural counties. The bridges bundled in this project provide critical linkages for the transport of grain and livestock from farms to markets throughout the region.
- **MAINE:** \$69,659,473 to the Maine Department of Transportation for the I-95 Accessibility Improvements Minimizing Heavy-Truck Impacts project that will replace six bridges carrying rural roads over Interstate 95 in Kennebec County, Maine. The structures, all built in the late 1950s, are located in a priority corridor and are at risk due to insufficient vertical clearances, outdated design, and deterioration. The bridges and interstate provide access to employment, education, healthcare, and other opportunities for Mainers and serve as an important link in the region's supply chain.
- **MAINE:** \$63,016,563 to the Maine Department of Transportation for the I-395 Bridge Bundle project that will replace six damaged and degrading bridges along Interstate 395. The project will greatly improve the condition, safety, reliability, and resiliency of the bridges, all of which are integral parts of the roadway network that connects Bangor and Brewer to other parts of the state.
- **MICHIGAN:** \$34,202,150 to the Michigan Department of Transportation for the Michigan Urban Bridges Revitalization project that will replace seven deteriorating bridges to provide reliable infrastructure that supports freight movement throughout the region and connects residents to schools, jobs, and critical services. The project includes bridges in key urban centers, supporting economic growth in Bay, Oakland, Washtenaw, and Wayne Counties along with the cities of Ferrysburg, Lansing, and Lincoln Park. Overall, the project supports more than 3.5 million residents, including two Areas of Persistent Poverty and two Historically Disadvantaged Communities.
- **MINNESOTA:** \$34,303,583 to the City of Minneapolis for the Nicollet Avenue Bridge over Minnehaha Creek Rehabilitation project. The existing Nicollet Avenue Bridge, built in the 1920s, is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and was not designed to handle the current or projected future volume of daily traffic, resulting in significant safety concerns. The rehabilitation of the bridge's aging structure will support mobility for freight, emergency, and transit vehicles along the Nicollet Avenue corridor, in addition to pedestrians and bicyclists. The bridge serves as a key linkage for numerous modes of transportation: situated only two blocks west of Interstate 35W (I-35), it's designated as a minor reliever route and General Truck Route, accommodating over 10,000 vehicles daily.
- **MISSISSIPPI:** \$67,512,520 to the Mississippi Department of Transportation for the Central Bridge Bundle project in Lauderdale, Madison, and Newton Counties to replace a total of 13 bridge structures in central Mississippi. The aging bridges connect rural Mississippi to urban areas, including the state capital. All 13 bridges do not meet current design standards, have extremely narrow lanes, and pose safety risks to travelers. The narrow widths of the current bridges do not adequately support freight movement through the region. Their replacement is important to the economic competitiveness of the state, as freight movement in Mississippi is anticipated to grow at least 60% by 2050.
- **MISSOURI:** \$39,934,854 to the City of Kansas City for the Bridging Kansas City to the Future – Kansas City Bridge Investment Package project that will replace or rehabilitate nine bridges that are deteriorating and in need of replacement or significant rehabilitation. The average age of the bridges included in this project is 81 years old, and the oldest bridge was constructed 118 years ago. All nine bridges are critical to Kansas City's infrastructure and serve many needs, from connecting historically disadvantaged neighborhoods, to promoting active transportation, to serving as important corridors for freight movement.
- **MONTANA:** \$28,462,652 to the Montana Department of Transportation for the Sportsman's Bridge Replacement project. The project will replace the existing two-lane bridge – which was originally built in 1955 – with a more resilient bridge to maintain and improve access over the Flathead River in northwest Montana on Montana Highway 82 in Flathead County. The bridge's location over the Flathead River provides the most direct and quickest point of access around the

northern half of Flathead Lake – failure or closure of the existing bridge would significantly impact the region’s transportation network and economic growth.

- **NEBRASKA:** \$11,948,372 to Platte County for the Loup Canal Bridges – Today’s Public Works Administration project that will remove and replace four structures on the Loup Power Canal, which was originally built as part of Franklin D. Roosevelt’s New Deal during the Great Depression. The bridges are deteriorating and do not meet current design standards, affecting residential and commercial travel as well as emergency services for the County.
- **NEW JERSEY:** \$47 million to the County of Mercer for the Replacement of Lincoln Avenue Bridge, Mercer County Bridge Carrying Lincoln Avenue (County Route 626) over AMTRAK and Assunpink Creek project. The Mercer County Bridge carries Lincoln Avenue (County Route 626) over Amtrak’s Northeast Corridor (NEC) rail line, an abandoned rail yard, and Assunpink Creek. This project will completely replace the deficient structure, for which Mercer County has frequently completed repairs to preserve and prevent concrete from falling onto the Northeast Corridor tracks. Replacing this structure is necessary to maintain the operations and safety of the NEC rail network itself.
- **NEW YORK:** \$11,567,200 to Schoharie County for the replacement of the existing Bridge Street Truss Bridge over Schoharie Creek, which was originally constructed in 1928 and is a crucial part of Schoharie County’s transportation system. The bridge carries County Route 1A (Bridge Street and Schoharie Hill Road), which is the only direct east-west connector between routes NYS Route 30 and NY Route 146 for over 15 miles, yet current load restrictions due to the poor condition of the bridge impact the efficiency of freight movement along these routes.
- **NORTH DAKOTA:** \$9.4 million to the North Dakota Department of Transportation for the Safe & Resilient Passages at Standing Rock project that will replace two deteriorating bridges located along ND Highway 1806 in Morton and Sioux Counties. These bridges serve as essential lifelines for communities in Morton and Sioux Counties, providing vital connections for emergency services and economic opportunities. Both bridges are located just north of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation, home to 15,000 of the 15,568 total enrolled members of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe.
- **NORTH DAKOTA:** \$2.7 million to the North Dakota Department of Transportation for the Viking Bridge Reconstruction project to redesign the deteriorating bridge and incorporate measures to prevent scouring and improve resilience against flooding events. Built in 1969, the Viking Bridge is frequently affected by spring flooding. Addressing the existing bridge’s geometric deficiencies will help meet current and future traffic demands, both for cars and pedestrians. Pedestrian use of the bridge is high due to the location of Valley City State University on both sides of the river crossing, as well as the Gaukler Family Wellness Center.
- **OKLAHOMA:** \$13,793,400 to the Absentee-Shawnee Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma for the Absentee Shawnee Tribe Porter Avenue Bridge Replacement project that will replace the Porter Avenue Bridge, a structurally at-risk bridge that carries Porter Avenue over Little River in Norman, Oklahoma. The 87-year-old bridge cannot meet the load and traffic requirements of the regional transportation network and is prone to flooding. If not replaced, it threatens the mobility of people and goods through the region and will impact future economic growth. The project will improve the quality of life for local and regional bridge users, primarily impacting the Absentee Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma.
- **SOUTH DAKOTA:** \$3,133,863 to the Minnehaha County Highway Department for the Minnehaha County Highway 104 Bridge Replacement project that will remove and replace three bridges along Minnehaha County Highway 104 (Co. Hwy 104). The bridges, constructed between 1922 and 1940, are deteriorating and threaten the efficiency of travel and freight movement along Co. Hwy 104, a critical Rural Major Collector that connects residents and important commercial and agricultural commodities to and from northern Minnehaha County to other regional arterial roadways and essential local destinations.
- **TEXAS:** \$32 million to the City of Austin for the Barton Springs Road Bridge project that will replace the existing three-span Barton Springs Road Bridge, which consists of the original 99-year-old south structure and a north structure, a 78-year-old addition to the original, with a new bridge that will widen the current structure’s deck. Replacing the current structure, which is past its useful life, will create additional space for safe multi-modal pathways for bicyclists and pedestrians, resolve lane misalignment within the adjacent transportation network, and alleviate structural deterioration that is impacting the bridge’s ability to handle current and future traffic volume.
- **WYOMING:** \$23 million to the National Park Service to preserve, protect, and extend the life of the historic Gardner River Bridge in Yellowstone National Park. Originally built in 1939, the 200-foot-high bridge – which crosses the Gardner River and provides an expansive view of Mount Everts to the east and Bunsen Peak to the west – serves as a critical transportation link to some of Yellowstone’s major destinations and for local communities. In 2021 over 4.8 million people visited Yellowstone National Park, and the primary electric power line for the region hangs underneath the bridge – protecting this power line is critical to maintaining and improving economic competitiveness of the region. Additionally, depending on the severity of the winter, herds of 50-4,000 bison cross the Gardner River Bridge when migrating each year. Without preservation, the bridge could close in three to five years.

For more information on BIP, please visit the FHWA’s [Bridge Investment Program webpage at www.fhwa.dot.gov/bridge/bip/index.cfm](https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/bridge/bip/index.cfm).





# TXDOT WARNING DRIVERS OF SPIKE IN TEXTING SCAMS TARGETING TXTAG CUSTOMERS

Texting scams are targeting toll customers in Texas saying they're from TxTag, and the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) is warning everyone to be on the lookout.

There have been multiple reports of TxTag customers receiving text messages claiming to have a balance due or past due. These SMS text phishing scams, also known as smishing, have been occurring since April, but appear to have increased recently. TxDOT is working to have fraudulent websites taken down in hopes of preventing customers from becoming victims.

TxTag takes customer account security and verification very seriously. While TxTag currently communicates with customers via email, text and outbound phone calls, it will not send text messages regarding final payment reminders or past due balances. Any text messages sent to TxTag customers will be sent from 22498.

TxDOT asks TxTag customers to be vigilant of these ongoing scams and contact TxTag Customer Service directly at [TxTag.org](https://www.txtag.org) or by calling 1-888-468-9824, should customers receive an unsolicited text, email or message purporting to be from TxTag or another toll agency. They should also not click on or open any links.

Emails and texts are sent to the email address and/or the phone number that customers provide in their account. Customers are required to opt into email and/or text notifications in order to receive emails and/or texts from TxTag. If customers are unsure if they are opted into email and/or text notifications, they can log into their TxTag online account or contact TxTag customer service to confirm.

TxTag requires all customers to confirm their account information and verify their identity before providing any information to ensure they are speaking with the correct person on the account.

If a customer receives a phone call, email or text message they believe may be a scam, they should contact TxTag customer service directly at [TxTag.org](https://www.txtag.org) or by calling 1-888-468-9824.

Anyone who believes they have received a fraudulent text can file a complaint with the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) at [www.ic3.gov](https://www.ic3.gov).

[The FBI posted more information on this scam online.](#)



# DOES A FULL MOON RAISE THE RISK OF VEHICLE COLLISIONS WITH WILDLIFE?



Workers who drive at night, take note: Vehicle-wildlife collisions may be almost 50% more likely to occur during a full moon, results of a recent study suggest.

Researchers at Texas A&M University analyzed 10 years of Texas collision data against [lunar phases](#). They found that vehicle-wildlife collisions increased 45.8% during a full moon compared with a new moon and were more likely to take place in rural areas.

"No statistical difference" in non-wildlife collisions was observed during either phase.

A university press release cites previous studies, conducted worldwide, that have found "similar increased collision trends" during a full moon.

"Although the illumination is better, it's still nighttime," Dominique Lord, study co-author and professor of civil engineering at Texas A&M, said in the release. "When you drive at night, I'm not sure the illumination from the various perspectives is so much greater compared to daytime."

The researchers say the results may "help inform transportation policy and infrastructure improvements where better safety measures are necessary." They suggest further study into driver fatigue at night as well as heightened animal activity.

AAA offers [guidance](#) to help avoid motor vehicle-wildlife collisions:



*Photo: Jena Ardell/gettyimages*

- Scan the road and shoulders ahead of you.
- Use high-beam headlights if there's no oncoming traffic.
- If a collision is unavoidable, apply the brakes firmly and stay in your lane.
- Be extra cautious at dawn and dusk, and when traveling through areas with a high and active wildlife population.

The study was [published](#) in the journal Transportation Research Part D: Transport and Environment.

*Permission to reprint granted by the National Safety Council)*



# VISION ZERO FOR YOUTH U.S. LEADERSHIP AWARD



The Vision Zero for Youth U.S. Leadership Award recognizes places that are taking bold steps to stop severe injuries and deaths among child and youth pedestrians and bicyclists. The award aims to highlight noteworthy practices and inspire other communities to act.

Communities that have taken action and shown progress in improving child and youth pedestrian and bicyclist safety are encouraged to apply, regardless of whether the work is part of Vision Zero, a Safety Action plan or other program.

The winner will be announced in Spring 2025.

Now in its eighth year, the Vision Zero for Youth U.S. Leadership Award is given annually by the National Center for Safe Routes to School in partnership with the FIA Foundation and the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center.

## ELIGIBILITY

- All communities are eligible. Communities include counties, cities, Tribal governments, towns, townships, boroughs and villages. Please email [info@visionzerooryouth.org](mailto:info@visionzerooryouth.org) with any questions about eligibility.
- Applications may be submitted by the intended recipient or nominated by an outside individual or organization.
- Local government Vision Zero commitment is not required.
- Communities of any population size are eligible for the award.
- Efforts to advance child and youth pedestrian safety must benefit one or more [disinvested areas](#).

## CRITERIA AND SELECTION

Note: Applicants do not need to have action or success in all bulleted items in order to be selected for the award.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS – 10 POINTS

- Accessible infrastructure improvements to calm traffic, improve crossings, and/or provide safe spaces for youth walking, biking, or rolling.

- Establishment of policies that benefit youth pedestrians or bicyclists such as a neighborhood traffic calming program, prioritized list of schools for improvements, school zone camera program or something else.
- Evidence of progress (such as reductions in deaths and severe injuries; reduction in vehicle speeds; increases in walking and biking; implementation of proven safety countermeasures).
- Adopted Vision Zero, Safety Action plan or other plan(s) that targets safety issues for children and youth with strategies beyond education.

## COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT – 10 POINTS

- Partnerships with school districts, other departments within the same agency, State departments of transportation, local organizations, community members, elected officials, youth groups and advocates.
- Evidence of neighborhood involvement (such as work with the community to create support for traffic calming measures that began with a focus on child pedestrians and/or bicyclists).
- Evidence of support from local government, elected officials, or other leaders and decision makers for youth pedestrian and bicyclist safety.

## APPROACH – 10 POINTS


- Implementation of proven strategies and [countermeasures](#).
- Proactive identification of places that have the greatest risk of crashes and prioritizing resources to those places.
- Focus on built environment and not just youth education.
- Evidence of long-term commitment.

These elements all align with a [Safe System approach](#).

## SUBMISSION PROCESS

Submissions are accepted at [www.visionzerooryouth.org/awards/us/us-application](http://www.visionzerooryouth.org/awards/us/us-application). Deadline for submission is December 15, 2024. Please contact [info@visionzerooryouth.org](mailto:info@visionzerooryouth.org) if you have any questions.





# NHTSA RFI ON PDO CRASH REPORTING AND DATA MANAGEMENT

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), has published a Request for Information (RFI) on Property Damage Only (PDO) crash reporting and data management. This is part of a research study NHTSA is funding to gain a deeper understanding of how States gather information on PDO crashes and which practices are being used both at the State level and in individual local law enforcement departments.

This notice requests information from interested parties to assist the agency in researching property damage only (PDO) crash data collection practices across the United States. State statutes dictate that law enforcement should complete a crash report for PDO crashes meeting a set of criteria including when damage is above a certain dollar threshold that varies by State. When a crash is below the reportable threshold, States may allow civilians to complete a crash report designed specifically for them. In some cases, jurisdictions within States have stopped collecting PDO crashes in an effort to save officer time and/or money. Other jurisdictions have stopped sending sworn officers to respond to PDO crashes. However, the impacts of these changes on crash data collection are not well documented or understood.

NHTSA is seeking to identify States and jurisdictions that have modified their PDO crash reporting threshold or are using citizen or non-sworn officers to report PDO crashes, and to determine

the impacts of these practices on crash data analyses and agencies' budgets and time. NHTSA seeks comments from all interested parties, including State crash data owners, highway safety offices, law enforcement, and other stakeholders to help inform NHTSA's research into State PDO crash data collection practices.

The RFI is open for comments now. The comment period ends on 12/16/2024.

The RFI includes the following questions:

- Do you collect, manage, or use data for Property Damage Only (PDO) crashes?
- Does your State allow use of non-sworn officers to complete crash reports?
- Does your State have a short form crash report?
- Does your State have a driver exchange form?
- Have you studied the impact on reporting when your State changed the reporting threshold?

LINK: <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2024/10/16/2024-23099/agency-request-for-information-state-property-damage-only-pdo-data-collection-practices>

For more information, please contact Beau Burdett, National Center for Statistics and Analysis, NHTSA at (202) 366-7338 or [beau.burdett@dot.gov](mailto:beau.burdett@dot.gov).



# COMPETITIVE GRANT FUNDING MATRIX NOW AVAILABLE

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law authorized a variety of competitive grant programs that USDOT and FHWA use to fund an array of transportation projects and activities. USDOT developed a matrix to assist potential applicants—including State Highway agencies, metropolitan planning organizations, local governments or agencies, Tribes, territories, and protectorates—in determining their eligibility for each funding program. The [Competitive Grant](#)

[Funding Matrix](#) lists the available grant programs along with links to their respective grant information pages. Each program can be matched to the potential applicant types eligible for funding. Potential applicants should review program-specific guidance to make informed decisions about applying for funding under each program. View the Funding Matrix by visiting [www.fhwa.dot.gov/bipartisan-infrastructure-law/grant\\_programs.cfm](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/bipartisan-infrastructure-law/grant_programs.cfm).

## NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

### Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the Fiscal Years (FY) 2024-2026 Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-Saving Transportation (PROTECT) Program

FHWA is accepting applications under the Fiscal Years 2024-2026 Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-Saving Transportation (PROTECT) Program. The purpose of the PROTECT Program is to provide grants on a competitive basis for projects that seek to strengthen surface transportation to be more resilient to natural hazards, including climate change, sea level rise, heat waves, flooding, extreme weather events, and other natural disasters through support of planning activities, resilience improvements, community resilience and evacuation routes, and at-risk coastal infrastructure.

For each Application Open Period, FHWA plans to conduct outreach regarding PROTECT Discretionary Program grants in the form of virtual meetings (Webinars) after the NOFO period opens, and before the NOFO period closes. The Webinars will be recorded and posted on FHWA's PROTECT Discretionary Grant Program Website at [www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/protect/discretionary](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/protect/discretionary).

#### APPLICATION DEADLINES:

- FY 2024 and 2025 Deadline: February 24, 2025, 11:59 p.m. ET
- FY 2026 Deadline: February 24, 2026, 11:59 p.m. ET



### TxDOT's Request for Proposals (RFP) for FY 2026 Traffic Safety General Grants

TxDOT's Request for Proposals (RFP) for FY 2026 Traffic Safety General Grants was published in the Texas Register on November 8, 2024. All information on the RFP is available at [egrants.bts.txdot.gov/eGrantsHelp/RFP/2026/RFP2026.pdf](http://egrants.bts.txdot.gov/eGrantsHelp/RFP/2026/RFP2026.pdf). It is important for proposing agencies and organizations to read the RFP in its entirety. Proposals for the General Traffic Safety Grants must be completed and submitted using TxDOT Traffic Safety eGrants system no later than 5 p.m. CST, January 9, 2025.

For more information, visit [TxLTAP.org](https://TxLTAP.org)

Call 817-272-2581 or email [txltap@uta.edu](mailto:txltap@uta.edu) to request training, technical assistance or equipment.

## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Contact TxLTAP to schedule training or request assistance with developing a no-cost training program tailored to the unique needs of your organization. TxLTAP serves all Texas cities and counties, and instructors deliver training in accordance with all local safety guidelines.

## BUILD A BETTER MOUSETRAP

BABM is a competition by the Federal Highway Administration to discover, share, and celebrate innovations in road construction. Submit your innovative ideas, then TxLTAP selects nominations to be federally recognized.

## EQUIPMENT LENDING LIBRARY

Equipment, such as traffic counters, a portable radar speed sign, handheld retrorefelctometer, digital ball bank indicator, fall protection gear, dynamic cone penetrometer and more, is available for loan at no-cost to local government agencies throughout Texas.

## ROAD SAFETY CHAMPION PROGRAM

This nationally recognized certificate program equips participants with safety-focused skills for managing, maintaining, and designing local roads. The program focuses on reducing serious injuries and fatalities by building a workforce skilled in road safety.



# TXLTAP TRAINING & SERVICES

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF

TECHNICAL  
ASSISTANCE

TXLTAP TRAINING AND SERVICES ARE  
DELIVERED BY SEASONED INDUSTRY  
PROFESSIONALS WITH EXTENSIVE  
TRANSPORTATION KNOWLEDGE

TxLTAP instructors, subject matter experts, and staff include former maintenance managers, heavy equipment operators, road crew chiefs, civil and transportation engineers, inspectors, and public works directors who have all worked on Texas' roads and have the unique experience and knowledge to support local safety, maintenance, and innovation efforts.

In addition to delivering training classes, publishing Better Roads, Safer Roads, and providing information exchange opportunities at conferences, TxLTAP provides local roadway agencies an opportunity to consult directly with carefully selected subject matter experts to specifically address organizations' unique issues and offer meaningful solutions. Like all resources TxLTAP offers, there is no charge to receive technical assistance.

Do you need information on proper methods for repairing your lingering road problem? Would it help if someone came out to watch your road crew perform a repair and offer suggestions on how to save time and money in the future? Could you use the help of a traffic engineer who could assess a problematic intersection? Would it be a benefit to you if a subject matter expert came to ride and evaluate local roads or develop a no-cost training model specific to the needs of your workforce?

Take advantage of technical assistance services!

Call 817-272-2581 or email [txltap@uta.edu](mailto:txltap@uta.edu) to request assistance.





**UTA**  
Extension and Extended Campus

**- TxLTAP -**

**SAFETY:**  
Making Roads Safer  
for Workers & Drivers

**WORKFORCE  
DEVELOPMENT:**  
Training that Makes  
an Impact

**ORGANIZATIONAL  
EXCELLENCE:**  
Striving for Overall Quality

**INFRASTRUCTURE  
MANAGEMENT:** Building  
Smart & Using Resources  
Effectively

**TRAINING • TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE • RESOURCES**

TxLTAP serves local government roadway agencies by providing no cost training, technical assistance, equipment lending & more. Learn more at [TxLTAP.org](http://TxLTAP.org).

Request training & services today!

**TxLTAP@uta.edu | 817.272.2581**