

#TxPedSafety2024



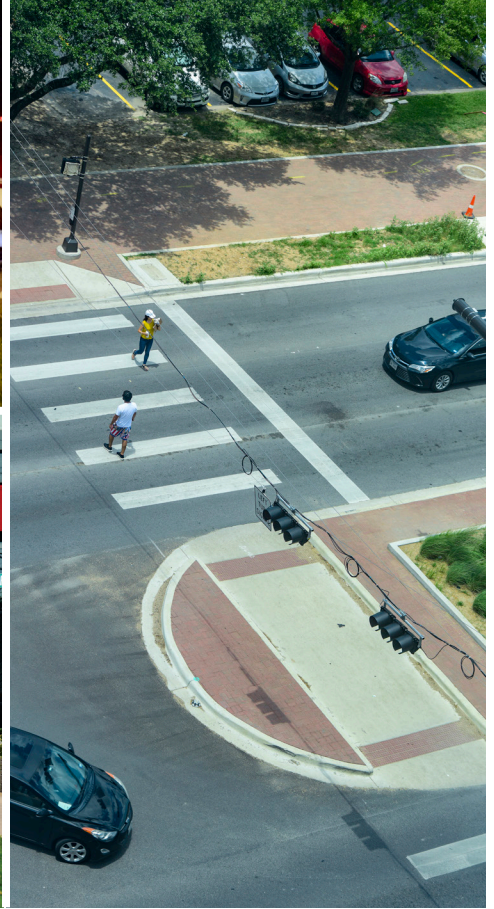
**2024**  
TEXAS STATEWIDE  
PEDESTRIAN  
SAFETY FORUM



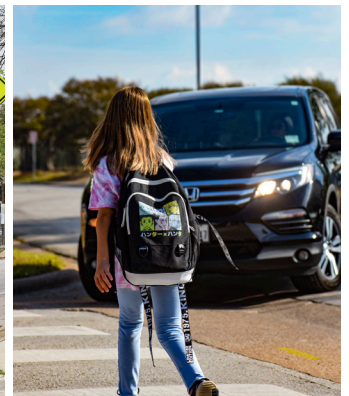
Center for Transportation Safety

**Thursday, May 2, 2024**

Norris Conference Centers, CityCentre – Houston | 816 Town & Country Blvd., Suite 210 | Houston, TX 77024



The 2024 Texas Statewide Pedestrian Safety Forum is hosted by the Texas A&M Transportation Institute and is funded through a grant from the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) Behavioral Traffic Safety Section through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA's) State Highway Safety Grant Programs.







## 2024 PEDESTRIAN SAFETY FORUM AGENDA

<b>9:00 a.m. – 9:45 a.m.</b> <i>Red Oak Ballroom AB</i>	<b>INTRODUCTION AND OPENING KEYNOTE</b> <b>Welcome, NHTSA &amp; TxDOT Keynote</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Elizabeth Jones, Pedestrian &amp; Bicycle Program Manager, Texas Department of Transportation</li><li>• Becky Walker, Regional Program Manager, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration</li><li>• Ugonna Ughanze, Director of Transportation Operations, Texas Department of Transportation, Houston District</li></ul>
<b>9:45 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.</b>	<b>Break</b>
<b>SESSION TRACK 1 – Concurrent Breakout Sessions</b>	
<b>10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.</b> <i>Live Oak</i>  Moderated by <b>Joel Peterman</b> , Principal, Fehr & Peers  <i>This session is eligible for 1 CM Credit</i>	<b>Charting the Road Ahead: Vision Zero Successes and Challenges in Texas</b> <p><i>This panel session features Vision Zero leaders from across Texas who are committed to eliminating all traffic deaths and serious injuries in their communities. Panelists will discuss the unique challenges and opportunities associated with Vision Zero in Austin, Houston, as well as from a Texas statewide perspective—with a specific focus on vulnerable road users. They will share the innovative approaches that are being taken to address these challenges as well as share plans for future activities and initiatives.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Joel Meyer, Acting Transportation Safety Officer, City of Austin</li><li>• Jay Blazek Crossley, Executive Director, Farm&amp;City</li><li>• Patrick Mandapaka, Director of Community Resilience &amp; Transportation Planning, Harris County</li></ul>
<b>10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.</b> <i>Elm</i>  Moderated by <b>Kim Sailor</b> , Project Specialist, Texas A&M Transportation Institute  <i>This session is eligible for 1 CM Credit</i>	<b>Empowering Tomorrow's Pedestrians in Tackling Rising Fatalities: A Collaborative Approach for Education and Youth Leadership in Pedestrian Safety</b> <p><i>This interactive session is dedicated to amplifying youth voices in pedestrian safety. Explore how youth, educational developers, and practitioners collaboratively address rising pedestrian fatalities while fostering educational and youth leadership opportunities. Discover the digital prowess, social influence, and community engagement of young individuals as catalysts for change. Featuring a diverse panel representing various perspectives, including a youth activist, educational program developers, and safety experts. Don't miss this opportunity to explore innovative approaches for creating safer streets by incorporating the voices and ideas of our youth.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Christine Yager, Teens in the Driver Seat, Texas A&amp;M Transportation Institute</li><li>• Esmerelda Gutierrez, U in the Driver Seat, Texas A&amp;M Transportation Institute</li><li>• Myungoon Ko, Research Engineer, Texas A&amp;M Transportation Institute</li></ul>



## 2024 PEDESTRIAN SAFETY FORUM AGENDA

### SESSION TRACK 1 – Concurrent Breakout Sessions (Continued)

**10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.**  
*Pecan*

Moderated by  
**Micah Leonard**, Associate  
Transportation Researcher,  
Texas A&M Transportation  
Institute

*This session is eligible  
for 1 CM Credit*

#### **A New Model for Complete Streets: Designing Walkable Environments through a Crime Prevention Lens**

*How do streets and crime intersect? Learn how approaching street design through the lens of crime prevention can create new streams of dialog with the community, elected officials, and law enforcement to support safer streets for all. Staff from Harris County Precinct 4 will discuss the utilization of crime prevention resources to rebuild streets that improve pedestrian safety in the Houston region.*

- **Jessica Wiggins**, Senior Planner, Harris County
- **Sandra Rodríguez**, President, Gulfton Super Neighborhood Council
- **Debbie Moran**, Soft Light Houston
- **Alex Dewitt**, Community Planner, Harris County

**11:00 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.**

**Break**

### SESSION TRACK 2 – Concurrent Breakout Sessions

**11:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.**  
*Live Oak*

Moderated by  
**Ben Ettelman**, Research  
Scientist, Texas A&M  
Transportation Institute

*This session is eligible  
for 1 CM Credit*

#### **Implementing Safe and Equitable Pedestrian Infrastructure: Successes, Challenges, and Lessons Learned**

*As transportation agencies throughout the United States undergo efforts to improve pedestrian safety, several factors contribute to the equitable implementation of these initiatives. There are a variety of success stories, such as the prioritization of safety projects in communities that have traditionally experienced underinvestment. However, disparity still exists with respect to pedestrian safety. Our panel of experts will share important context and background regarding equitable pedestrian safety, as well as the successes and challenges that practitioners and advocates continue to face in our effort to implement an inclusive and equitable transportation system.*

- **Veronica Davis**, Equity Expert and Author,  
“Inclusive Transportation: A Manifesto for Repairing Divided Communities”
- **Geoff Carleton**, Senior Principal, TEI Planning + Design
- **Amar Mohite**, Deputy Director, Capital Planning,  
Harris County Toll Road Authority



## 2024 PEDESTRIAN SAFETY FORUM AGENDA

### SESSION TRACK 2 – Concurrent Breakout Sessions (Continued)

<p><b>11:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.</b> <i>Elm</i></p> <p>Moderated by <b>Laura Higgins</b>, Research Scientist, Texas A&amp;M Transportation Institute</p> <p><b><i>This session is eligible for 1 CM Credit</i></b></p>	<p><b>Guidance and Resources for Increasing Safety and for all Pedestrians</b></p> <p><i>This session explores the essentials of pedestrian safety and engineering countermeasures in urban environments. Speakers will delve into Complete Streets design, emphasizing pedestrian safety while accommodating different transportation modes. Learn about key traffic safety measures, including crosswalk enhancements and signal timing adjustments. Discover the importance of strategic lighting for visibility and security. Gain practical insights to advocate for safer, pedestrian-friendly streets in your community.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>George Merritt</b>, Senior Safety and Geometric Design Engineer, Federal Highway Administration</li><li>• <b>Millie Hayes</b>, Safety &amp; Traffic Operations Specialist, Federal Highway Administration</li></ul>
<p><b>11:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.</b> <i>Pecan</i></p> <p>Moderated by <b>Micah Leonard</b>, Associate Transportation Researcher, Texas A&amp;M Transportation Institute</p> <p><b><i>This session is eligible for 1 CM Credit</i></b></p>	<p><b>Data-Driven Pedestrian Safety Analysis</b></p> <p><i>Explore the intricacies of data-driven safety analysis through a detailed examination of Safer Streets Priority Finder—an open-source web tool specifically designed to identify high-risk areas for vulnerable road users. Through a comprehensive demonstration, the functionalities of the tool will be unveiled, accompanied by a discussion on its implications for agencies responsible for road safety management. This session promises to shed light on cutting-edge methodologies in road safety analysis, emphasizing the utilization of robust data-driven approaches. Attendees will gain valuable insights into the transformative potential of Safer Streets Priority Finder and its role in enhancing safety initiatives on our roads.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Nan Jiang</b>, Data Science Practice Lead, Toole Design Group</li><li>• <b>Namoo Han</b>, Senior Professional Engineer, City of Fort Worth</li></ul>
<p><b>12:15 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.</b></p>	<p><b>Lunch</b></p>
<p><b>1:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.</b> <i>Red Oak Ballroom AB</i></p> <p>Moderated by <b>Ben Ettelman</b>, Research Scientist, Texas A&amp;M Transportation Institute</p>	<p><b>SPECIAL LUNCHTIME SESSION</b></p> <p><b>Resilience and Reform: Personal Narratives Inspiring Change</b></p> <p><b>The Honorable Leticia Van de Putte</b>, Former Member of the Texas State Senate</p> <p><i>Through powerful storytelling, former Texas State Senate member Leticia Van de Putte will share her journey of resilience and reform, shedding light on the profound impact of personal narratives in driving social change. This special session will share how individual experiences can galvanize movements, spark conversations, and inspire meaningful reform. Gain invaluable insights into the power of storytelling as a catalyst for positive societal transformation. Join us for an enlightening session that explores the intersection of personal resilience and collective reform, leaving you inspired to make a difference in your community.</i></p>



## 2024 PEDESTRIAN SAFETY FORUM AGENDA

<b>1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.</b> Red Oak Ballroom AB  Moderated by <b>Ben Ettelman</b> , Research Scientist, Texas A&M Transportation Institute  <b>This session is eligible for 1 CM Credit</b>	<b>FORUM KEYNOTE</b> <b>Narrowing Lanes, Saving Lives: Several Pathways Linking Street Design to Health and Safety</b>  <b>Shima Hamidi</b> , Bloomberg Assistant Professor & Director of the Center for Climate-Smart Transportation, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health  <i>In 2021, 42,915 deaths from car crashes were reported in the US, making fatalities a leading cause of death for people within the ages of 1 to 54. The U.S. exhibits by far the highest traffic fatality rates among developed counties with about 11.67 fatalities, compared to only 1.3 to 3.2 deaths per 100,000 population in European cities. The safety statistics are even more striking for pedestrian and cyclists. The year 2020 marked the deadliest year for pedestrians in 40 years. Pedestrian and cyclist fatalities have increased more than 40 percent just from 2010 to 2020. One key reason for such high rates of traffic fatalities has to do with our decades of car-oriented street design practices.</i>  <i>This keynote highlights some of these practices, particularly related to travel lane width as one of the most controversial street design characteristics. We will discuss whether wider lanes are safer than their narrower counterparts; why American streets are so wide; and what are the easiest and most cost-effective solutions to making them more livable, multi-modal and safe for everyone including pedestrians and cyclists as the most vulnerable street users.</i>
<b>2:30 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.</b>	<b>Break</b>
<b>SESSION TRACK 3 – Concurrent Breakout Sessions</b>	
<b>2:45 p.m. – 3:45 p.m.</b> Live Oak  Moderated by <b>Joan Hudson</b> , Research Engineer, Texas A&M Transportation Institute  <b>This session is eligible for 1 CM Credit</b>	<b>Interagency Coordination to Improve Pedestrian Safety in Houston: Best Practices and Lessons Learned</b>  <i>This panel session brings together leaders from local transportation agencies to share successes and lessons learned while working together to develop safe pedestrian facilities in Houston. Panelists will share examples of collaborative projects in the Houston region and discusses best practices for interagency coordination to improve pedestrian safety brief presentations followed by a moderated discussion, offering valuable insights and fostering collaborative approaches to enhance pedestrian safety in urban settings.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Virginia Lynn</b>, Senior Staff Analyst, City of Houston</li><li>• <b>James Keener</b>, Houston District, Texas Department of Transportation</li><li>• <b>Ramona Crayton</b>, Transit Safety Education Manager, Metropolitan Transit Authority</li></ul>



## 2024 PEDESTRIAN SAFETY FORUM AGENDA

### SESSION TRACK 3 – Concurrent Breakout Sessions (Continued)

**2:45 p.m. – 3:45 p.m.**  
*Elm*

Moderated by  
**Micah Leonard**, Associate  
Transportation Researcher,  
Texas A&M Transportation  
Institute

***This session is eligible  
for 1 CM Credit***

#### **Increasing Pedestrian Safety and Connectivity between Urban and Suburban Communities**

*While many of the discussions about pedestrian safety focus on facilities in urban areas, there are several excellent examples of planners in Texas enhancing pedestrian safety in suburban communities. Join us as we hear about several initiatives in Houston and Dallas that are creating safe pedestrian connections between suburban and urban communities through new trails, parkland, as well as through the retrofitting of existing infrastructure. Presenters will share best practices for funding approaches as well as lessons learned from retrofitting existing suburban neighborhoods with limited pedestrian facilities.*

- **Luis Guajardo**, Director of Planning and Community Development, Harris County
- **Philip Hiatt Haigh**, Executive Director, The Loop Dallas

**2:45 p.m. – 3:45 p.m.**  
*Pecan*

Moderated by  
**Laura Higgins**, Research  
Scientist, Texas A&M  
Transportation Institute

***This session is eligible  
for 1 CM Credit***

#### **Introduction to the Public Right-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG)**

*This session aims to delve into the newly released Public Rights-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG) offering participants a comprehensive understanding of its key standards. Discover how these guidelines can be effectively applied in various urban planning and infrastructure projects, ensuring accessibility and inclusivity for all individuals. Gain valuable insights from presenters who will not only provide practical applications but also advocate for the importance of accessibility in public spaces. Learn how to become a proactive advocate for accessibility in your community, fostering environments that are welcoming and accommodating to everyone.*

- **Jeremy Chrzan**, Multimodal Design Practice Lead, Toole Design Group
- **Gabe Cazares**, Executive Director, Link Houston





## 2024 PEDESTRIAN SAFETY FORUM AGENDA

### SPEAKER BIOS



#### **Jay Blazek Crossley**, Executive Director, Farm&City

Mr. Crossley is Executive Director of Farm&City (FarmAndCity.org), a 501c3 nonprofit dedicated to high quality urban and rural human habitat in Texas in perpetuity. Crossley has a Masters in Public Affairs from the LBJ School at UT-

Austin and eighteen years of experience changing Texas public policy to provide Texans with affordable options to live in safe, walkable urban places connected by high quality transit. Among other public roles, he has served on the Community Advisory Committee for Project Connect, on the Board of Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority, as Chair of Safe Streets Austin, as Chair of the City of Austin Pedestrian Advisory Council, the Texas Department of Transportation's (TXDOT) Council on System Safety, the ULI-Austin Transportation Strategic Council, the Capital Metro Project Connect Advisory Network, and as Chair of the H-GAC Pedestrian Bicyclist Subcommittee. Crossley contributed significantly to Houston's Complete Streets policy, Houston Metro's New Bus Network, Austin CapMetro's CapRemap, PlanHouston, Vision Zero adoption by cities across the state, TXDOT's Road to Zero Goal and funding increase, and to Project Connect.



#### **Geoff Carleton**, Senior Principal, TEI Planning + Design

As a Senior Principal at TEI, and leader of the firm's Planning & Design practice, Geoff focuses on developing multimodal transportation networks for sustainable communities. This includes designing safe and livable streets as well as

developing transit, walking, and bicycle networks that provide people attractive, healthy choices to access opportunities.

He has led major projects including METRO's New Bus Network, the Houston Bike Plan, the Montrose Walk & Bike Plan, and the Houston Bikeway Design project for Harris County. Some of his other favorite projects are the reimagining of healthy, active streets including Bagby in Downtown and Cullen through the University of Houston. He has also worked extensively at the intersection of transportation, health, and economic development to implement positive change in communities.



#### **Gabe Cazares**, Executive Director, Link Houston

Mr. Cazares is a proud Texan, a queer disabled Latino, and a self-described policy wonk. He serves as Executive Director of LINK Houston, a non-profit organization that advocates for equity in transportation so that all people can

reach opportunity. Leveraging community engagement and data analysis, LINK Houston works to ensure better transit; improve safety and accessibility for people walking, rolling, and biking; and keep communities united in the face of highway infrastructure development.

Previously, Cazares served as Director of the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities for the City of Houston, Texas. In that role, Gabe oversaw the accessible and timely delivery of city services, programs, and activities for over 215,000 Houstonians with disabilities. Gabe also previously served as Manager of Government Affairs at the National Federation of the Blind in Baltimore, Maryland. There, he managed the organization's education, technology, immigrants' rights, LGBTQ, and blind entrepreneur small business policy portfolio.

Gabe holds a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science with a Spanish minor from Texas State University. He and his partner live in Houston's east end with their five-year-old rescue dog, Sam.



#### **Jeremy Chrzan**, Multimodal Design Practice Lead, Toole Design Group

Mr. Chrzan is a Professional Engineer with nearly 25 years of experience in transportation, municipal, and site engineering projects. Jeremy leads Toole Design's Multimodal Design Practice where he works to develop

and apply best practices to accommodate the safety and comfort of people walking, biking, accessing transit, and driving. He is a National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) certified trainer, has been the lead engineer for the development of various local, state, and national U.S. design guidance, and an experienced street designer on projects across North America. Over the course of his career, Jeremy has designed or reviewed thousands of pedestrian curb ramps, led numerous pedestrian accessibility trainings, and helped develop and innovate new pedestrian accessibility guidance.



## 2024 PEDESTRIAN SAFETY FORUM AGENDA

### SPEAKER BIOS



#### **Ramona Crayton, Traffic Safety Education Manager, Houston Metro**

Ms. Crayton is the Transit Safety Education Manager for the Metropolitan Transit Authority (METRO). In this role, she is responsible for creating and implementing safety campaigns for the public and the Authority's

4,500 employees. Before this, she served as a senior public affairs representative and managed the employee volunteer program at the Authority. She is an experienced communications professional who spent three years in Iraq with KBR in the Theater Transportation Management division. Ramona has held a Certified Meeting Professional (CMP) designation since 2002 as a Convention Services Manager at the Greater Houston Convention & Visitors Bureau. She has a Master's of Administration degree in Business Communication and enjoys volunteering, traveling, and spending quality time with her three nephews, whom she loves to spoil.



#### **Veronica Davis, Equity Expert and Author, *Inclusive Transportation: A Manifesto for Repairing Divided Communities***

Veronica O. Davis, PE is a self-described transportation nerd and author of *Inclusive Transportation: A Manifesto for Repairing Divided Communities*. She

believes everyone should have access to safe, reliable, and affordable transportation.

She is currently the Director of Cities Program for AtkinsRéalis. She has over 20 years of experience in civil engineering and planning. Under the Mayor Turner Administration, she was the Director of Transportation & Drainage Operations for the City of Houston. She is also the co-founder and former Managing Partner at Nspiregreen LLC. She is one of the co-founders of Black Women Bike (BWB). She was the Vice President and City of Houston Representative on the National Association of City Transportation Officials.

She earned her dual Masters degrees (Engineering Management and Regional Planning) from Cornell University. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering from the University of Maryland. In July 2012, the White House recognized her as a Champion of Change and Transportation Innovator for her professional accomplishments and community advocacy in transportation.

She currently lives in Houston, Texas with her husband and daughter.



#### **Luis Guajardo, Director of Planning and Community Development, Harris County**

Mr. Guajardo is an urban and regional planning professional dedicated to fostering equitable and sustainable communities through planning, design, and policy. He has a binational

background, growing up along the U.S./ Mexico border with family roots in Monterrey, Nuevo León, and a passion for urbanism in both countries. Luis brings a track record of delivering impactful and award-winning plans/studies based on inclusive public engagement in the areas of housing, transportation, land use, resilience, urban design/placemaking, and regional development/governance.

Luis is certified by the American Institute of Certified Planners and serves as the Director of the American Planning Association's Houston chapter, a professional association for urban and city planners. He earned a Master of Science degree in Community and Regional Planning from the University of Texas at Austin in 2014 and a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from the University of St. Thomas in 2009.

Luis resides in the Houston metropolitan area with his wife, Patricia, and two children, Sebastian and Rafael. He serves as the Director of Planning for Harris County Precinct 4, the westernmost precinct in the county which is at the headwaters of metropolitan Houston. There he leads planning and community development efforts across a spectrum of rural, suburban, and urban communities, in the county's most ethnically diverse precinct and the most rapidly urbanizing area in the region.





## 2024 PEDESTRIAN SAFETY FORUM AGENDA

### SPEAKER BIOS



#### **Esmeralda Gutierrez, U in the Driver Seat, Texas A&M Transportation Institute**

Ms. Gutierrez is currently the Wellness Specialist for the Student Health & Wellness (SHW) Program at Texas A&M University-Kingsville (TAMUK). She is pursuing her Master's degree in

Business Administration with a certificate in collaboration and team dynamics. In the last four years, she has designed and implemented several health and wellness educational programs and events throughout each semester on her campus. During her time in PEP Talk (the Peer Educator Program at TAMUK) and U in the Driver Seat Program run by the Texas A&M Transportation Institute (TTI), she has had the opportunity to experience peer-to-peer education and now strives to train the next generation of peer educators in promoting awareness and education regarding all health and wellness issues.



#### **Philip Hiatt Haigh, Executive Director, The Loop Dallas**

Mr. Haigh is the Executive Director of The Loop Dallas, a visionary initiative recognized as the 2023 D CEO Organization of the Year (midsize). The Loop Dallas is dedicated to uniting neighborhoods in the heart of Dallas

and transforming the city into a hub of walkable green spaces.

Under Philip's management, The Loop Dallas has achieved significant milestones including the successful completion of its inaugural project, opening the North Phase of the Trinity Forest Spine Trail. The Loop Dallas is currently on track to deliver all projects needed to complete the 50-mile circuit: the long-awaited Trinity Forest Spine Trail, the Hi Line Connector, the Discovery Gateway, and the Skyline Trail Link. The organization's dedication to its mission has also been underscored by securing an additional \$42 million in funding from multiple public sources, bringing the total for all projects to a remarkable \$90 million, raised from private and public donations.

Philip is known for his commitment to pro-people, pro-growth perspectives and has worked closely with elected officials at all levels of government. His dedication extends to serving as the Vice-Chair of the

TxDOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee in Austin, and as a Board Member of the Dallas County Trail and Preserve Program.

Philip is recognized as one of D CEO's most influential leaders in North Texas (Dallas 500) and holds a Master's of Liberal Studies from Southern Methodist University in International Studies & Human Rights and Social Justice and a BFA in Sculpture with a minor in Mass Communication from Texas Tech University.

Philip lives in Oak Cliff with his wife and their bicycles.



#### **Dr. Shima Hamidi, Bloomberg Assistant Professor of American Health & Director of Center for Climate-Smart Transportation, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health**

Dr. Hamidi is Bloomberg Assistant Professor at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg

School of Public Health. She is a geospatial data analyst, and her research focuses on the most pressing environmental and transportation challenges that affect communities and particularly low-income, vulnerable populations such as housing affordability, transportation equity, and location efficiency. Since 2023, she has been serving as Director and Lead PI of a \$10-million University Transportation Center (UTC) funded by the U.S. Department of Transportation. From 2016-2020, she has a \$7.5 million UTC in Texas (Center for Transportation Equity, Decision, and Dollars), focusing on teaching, research, and outreach activities that make transportation options more efficient and accessible to all. She has written over 58 books and articles on the intersection of transportation, public health, and the built environment and has been invited for expert testimonies by elected officials and policymakers at the local and state levels on several occasions. The results of her research have been cited in more than 110 national and regional newspapers and magazines such as the *Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Post*, and *CNN Money*.



## 2024 PEDESTRIAN SAFETY FORUM AGENDA

### SPEAKER BIOS



#### **Namoo Han, Senior Professional Engineer, City of Fort Worth**

Mr. Han is a Senior Professional Engineer for the City of Fort Worth and leads the Neighborhood Safety team in Transportation Management. His group addresses resident's concerns ranging from speeding and stop sign warrants

to parking issues and truck traffic restrictions. They are responsible for the new Neighborhood Traffic Calming program which installs speed cushions and other traffic calming devices. He has been at the city for almost three years. Prior to working for Fort Worth, he spent five years as a traffic engineer for Freese and Nichols performing traffic studies and designing signals.

Namoo obtained his Master's in Transportation Engineering from Texas A&M University and has a Bachelor's in Civil Engineering from West Virginia University.



#### **Amelia (Millie) Hayes, Safety & Traffic Operations Specialist, Federal Highway Administration**

Ms. Hayes is a Safety & Traffic Operations Specialist with the Federal Highway Administration. She currently serves in the Texas Division in Austin. She is the lead for statewide TSMO,

TIM, planning for operations efforts, and ITS, as well as statewide pedestrian/bicycle safety and other safety oversight duties. Her previous positions include Major Projects Engineer for Michigan Division and Area Engineer for Texas Division. Millie is a graduate of Iowa State University (go Cyclones!) and currently resides in Dallas with her spouse, children, and dog.



#### **Nan Jiang, Data Science Practice Lead, Toole Design Group**

Ms. Jiang is the Data Science Practice Lead and Interim Austin Office Director at Toole Design Group. She is highly skilled in statistical modeling, data mining, interpretation, and visualization. She incorporates leading-edge data

analysis practices into transportation projects of all modes. She has expertise in safety analysis and planning, active transportation planning, multimodal corridor studies, and travel demand modeling. She is passionate about creating a safe transportation system for all and works with many agencies across Texas and the nation to help them achieve Vision Zero through data-driven safety analysis and planning processes.



#### **Elizabeth Jones, Pedestrian & Bicycle Program Manager, Texas Department of Transportation**

Ms. Jones is the Program Manager for the TxDOT Pedestrian, Bicycle and Motorcycle Safety Program Areas. She manages statewide grants through the Behavioral Traffic Safety Section.

She has spent most of her career in pedestrian and bicycle safety with an emphasis on child pedestrian safety advocacy. Prior to TxDOT, she managed School Crossing Guard programs in Georgia, developed crossing guard training curriculums and led walk audits as a Safe Routes to School Outreach Coordinator funded by the Georgia Department of Transportation. She helped to make school zones safer for students to walk and bike to school by introducing alternative routes. Throughout her career, she has coordinated community outreach events and bike rodeos focusing on pedestrian, bike and motorcycle safety. After moving to Texas, Elizabeth began her career with TxDOT as a Traffic Safety Specialist in the Dallas District. Elizabeth holds Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Communication and Public Affairs.



#### **James Keener, Engineering Specialist, Texas Department of Transportation, Houston District**

Mr. Keener has worked in the TxDOT, Houston District's Traffic Engineering Section for over 23 years. He has served in many different capacities, namely Safe Routes to School Coordinator,

Highway Safety Improvement Program coordinator, Fatal Crash Review team member, and Special Events Coordinator. James has also been involved designing and building the Houston District's Art Cars. In his spare time, he enjoys spending time with family and woodworking.



## 2024 PEDESTRIAN SAFETY FORUM AGENDA

### SPEAKER BIOS



**Myunghoon Ko, Research Engineer, Texas A&M Transportation Institute**

Dr. Ko has been working as a Research Engineer at the Texas A&M Transportation Institute (TTI) since earning a Doctoral degree in Transportation Engineering from Texas A&M University in December 2011.

Dr. Ko previously worked as a safety inspector for the Korea Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport for four and half years prior to initiating his doctoral studies. Dr. Ko has participated in research projects by the FHWA and TxDOT, as well as an international project focused on the evaluation of the effectiveness of crash countermeasures and the implementation of roads and treatments to improve traffic safety.

Currently, Dr. Ko is leading several pedestrian safety projects focused on the safety improvement of pedestrians/bicyclists aged 5 to 14 years old, and 65 years old and older. The TTI team he leads developed age appropriate and effective educational materials such as animated videos, a cartoon book, virtual reality adapted experience, and safety brochures. Using the materials, the TTI team has conducted outreach activities to improve pedestrian safety on roads.



**Virginia Lynn, Senior Staff Analyst, City of Houston**

Virginia Lynn is a Senior Staff Analyst with Houston Public Works in the Multimodal Safety & Design Service Delivery Team in the Transportation & Drainage Operations Service Line. Virginia is committed to equity for all

Houston residents by providing safe, interconnected, efficient, and comfortable transportation options. In her role in Multimodal Safety & Design, she is working towards meeting the action items in the Houston Vision Zero Action Plan. Her work includes transportation safety studies, assuring roadway design conformance to the City's the Infrastructure Design Manual, and overseeing grant application development for the Highway Safety Improvement program. Virginia is a former Land Use Planner with the New York City Department of Citywide Administrative Services and earned her Master's of Science degree in City and Regional Planning from the Pratt Institute.



**Patrick Mandapaka, Director of Community Resilience & Transportation Planning, Harris County**

Mr. Mandapaka currently serves as the Director of Community Planning and Transportation at the Harris County Engineering Department. Patrick leads Planning and Grants divisions at Harris County including Vision Zero, transportation, parks, and infrastructure planning, and grants areas. Patrick has over 20 years of urban planning and policy experience. Patrick currently serves on the City of Houston's Planning Commission and Houston-Galveston Area Council's (H-GAC) Transportation Advisory Committee. Prior to the current position, Patrick worked as the Assistant Director for the Transportation Department at H-GAC, the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Houston-Galveston area for six years, leading transportation plans, programs, and projects within the eight-county region. He worked as a Principal Planner at the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) for a decade, and managed Sustainable Development Funding, Transit-Oriented Development, and Community Schools and Transportation Programs. Prior to joining NCTCOG, Patrick worked as a Project Manager and Planner for six years on housing and community development projects in over 20 states as a consultant.

Patrick received his Doctoral degree in Urban Planning and Public Policy and Master's degree in City and Regional Planning from the University of Texas at Arlington. He received a Bachelor's degree in Architecture from Andhra University in India. He received the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) Professional Certification in GIS, and Advanced Diploma in Architectural CADD Certifications. Patrick is a member of the American Planning Association (APA).

Patrick is the Director of Community Resilience & Transportation Planning at the Harris County Office of Engineering. He has been a public servant with 20 years of experience in urban planning and policy. With a skilled team of planners, they forecast infrastructure and community needs, prioritize data-driven investments, and evaluate community impacts.





## 2024 PEDESTRIAN SAFETY FORUM AGENDA

### SPEAKER BIOS



#### **George Merritt, Senior Safety and Geometric Design Engineer, Federal Highway Administration**

Mr. Merritt is a Senior Safety and Geometric Design Engineer with the Federal Highway Administration's Resource Center. He is responsible for deploying new design-related

technology to help improve safety on our Nation's highways through the application of performance based practical design, innovative design, nighttime visibility, complex freeway interchange design, and predictive safety using the AASHTO Highway Safety Manual. George has worked for FHWA for 22 years and prior to joining FHWA served as a Bituminous Engineer for the Indiana Department of Transportation.



#### **Joel Meyer, Acting Transportation Safety Officer, City of Austin**

Mr. Meyer currently serves as the Acting Transportation Safety Officer overseeing the City of Austin's Vision Zero program. He has helped lead several strategic initiatives to operationalize a Safe Systems approach

to traffic safety in Austin, including reforming TPW's Speed Management Program, enhancing citywide street lighting, developing a comprehensive access management strategy, and performing safety analytics to help prioritize safety investments. Joel also oversees the implementation of Austin's \$23 million Safe Streets and Roads for All grant and over \$95 million in Vision Zero Bond funding for safety projects. Prior to joining the Vision Zero team in 2018, Joel served as the City of Austin's Pedestrian Coordinator and was the lead author of Austin's Pedestrian Safety Action Plan.



#### **Amar Mohite, Deputy Director, Capital Planning, Harris County Toll Road Authority**

Mr. Amar Mohite leads Harris County Toll Road Authority's (HCTRA's) Capital Planning Division as the Deputy Director. He is an experienced and effective leader driving change

through progressive urban design and planning principles, with a penchant for civic minded solutions. He is leading the development of corridor studies and supporting the implementation of 142 miles of active transportation projects and 134 intersection safety improvements. Over the last six years he led Harris County Precinct One's Capital Improvements Program for implementing multi-

modal street infrastructure and parks improvements, with the goal of improving quality of life, accessibility, and safety. Projects included 40 miles of street improvements, 226 acres park development and over \$33 million in partnership projects across Harris County. Prior to joining Harris County, Mr. Mohite led the Transportation Planning Division for the City of Houston.



#### **The Honorable Leticia Van de Putte, Former Member of the Texas State Senate**

The Honorable Leticia Van de Putte, a practicing pharmacist since 1980, served in the Texas Legislature for over two decades representing a large portion of San Antonio and

Bexar County. She has been recognized and honored with over two hundred awards and citations for her work on behalf of small business, veterans, families, quality education, healthcare and economic development. Senator Van de Putte was named by *Texas Monthly Magazine* as one of the "Top Ten Legislators" and is the subject of a book, *Latina Legislator: Leticia Van de Putte and the Road to Leadership* by Dr. Sharon Navarro.

Nationally, Leticia has held numerous important positions on Boards, Commissions, Foundations, MALDEF, LULAC, and currently sits on the board of the Latino Leaders Network and is in demand as a dynamic and inspiring speaker. She is especially recognized for her work in advocating for active-duty military, their families and veterans, and her work combatting human trafficking.

In 2016, she and former Texas Secretary of State Hope Andrade, joined forces to form Andrade-Van de Putte & Associates, a full-service consulting firm.

Van de Putte, a life-long San Antonian, is a 1973 graduate of Thomas Jefferson High School, a 1979 honors graduate of the University of Texas College of Pharmacy and was a Kellogg Fellow at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government.

Leticia and her husband Pete of over 45 years live in San Antonio and are blessed with six wonderful children — Nichole, Vanessa, Henry, Gregory, Isabella, and Paul and 13 nearly perfect grandchildren, Julian, Jove, Marlo, Elliot, Asher, Coy, Claire, twins, Henry IV and Camila, Hugo III, Hero Oliver, Evelyn Rose and baby Rex, who is now an angel.



## 2024 PEDESTRIAN SAFETY FORUM AGENDA

### SPEAKER BIOS



**Sandra Rodriguez, President, Gulfton Super Neighborhood Council**

Passionate about community development, equity, and civic engagement, Ms. Rodriguez is a seasoned leader dedicated to making a positive impact. She

currently serves as the Advocacy Director at Latinos for Education in Houston, where she drives the organization's advocacy strategy and implemented the Latino Family Education Fellowship. Her commitment to community development is underscored by her role as President of the Gulfton Super Neighborhood Council since 2016, where she has successfully advocated for infrastructure and mobility improvements and implemented innovative community engagement practices.



**Ugonna Ughanze, Director of Transportation Operations, Texas Department of Transportation, Houston District**

Mr. Ughanze was appointed to the position of Texas Department of Transportation Houston District Director of Transportation Operations in 2014. Ugonna has worked in

various sections in the Houston District including Lab Construction in the Area office, Right of Way, Consultant Contracts Design, Traffic System Construction, Traffic Management Systems, and signals. Ugonna earned his Bachelor's in Civil Engineering from the University of Nigeria in 1991. He completed his Master's of Science in Engineering Management from the University of Texas in Austin while heading the signal section in 2012 and became a licensed Professional Engineer in 2002. Ugonna was the recipient of the 2021 Luther DeBerry award, which recognizes the outstanding contribution of an individual to the field of transportation in Texas.

In his spare time, Ugonna spends time with family, walks, hunts and performs charity work in the church with the Knights of Columbus, where he is a Fourth Degree Sir Knight. He has been married to Dr. Enoch Ughanze for 28 years and they have two sons.



**Becky Birdwell Walker, Regional Program Manager, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration**

Ms. Walker is a Regional Program Manager in Fort Worth, Texas with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). She joined NHTSA in July of 2016. Her primary

duties include the coordination of NHTSA's Pedestrian/Bicycle Safety, Distracted/Drowsy Driving, Motorcycle Safety, Employer Programs, Silver Drivers, and Regional Meetings Coordination. Ms. Walker is the Contracting Officer's Representative for the media contract in the Region. She served on the Dallas-Fort Worth Leadership Federal Executive Board (FEB), representing NHTSA to other federal agencies. In addition, Ms. Walker is responsible for the coordination of Texas' highway safety programs, which is one of the largest highway safety programs in the United States.

In 2022, Walker was awarded the Department of Transportation Secretary's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Award for commitment to advancing safety for all and promoting meaningful and inclusive stakeholder engagement in NHTSA's Highway Safety Program. Also in 2022, she received the DFW FEB's Interagency Team Award (among 80 agencies across the DFW Federal community). This award was for outstanding work with federal agencies to advance tribal safety. In 2020, she was a finalist for the DFW FEB's Interagency Collaboration Award, which recognizes those who make significant contributions to public service in activities that require coordination, planning and collaboration with other Federal governmental agencies.

Ms. Walker, a native of Fort Worth, holds a Master's of Journalism degree from the University of North Texas, in Denton and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Communications from Stephen F. Austin State University, in Nacogdoches, Texas.



## 2024 PEDESTRIAN SAFETY FORUM AGENDA

### SPEAKER BIOS



**Jessica Wiggins**, Senior Planner,  
Harris County

Ms. Wiggins works at the intersection of community development, transportation, and advocacy to drive innovative street designs and policies forward. A skilled facilitator and artist, Jessica uses tactical urbanism and educational exercises to increase public capacity to advocate for change in the public realm.



**Christine Yager**, Teens in the Driver  
Seat, Texas A&M Transportation  
Institute

Ms. Yager is a Project Specialist and Researcher in TTI's Center for Transportation Safety where she focuses her work on youth transportation safety. She has over ten years of research experience in traffic safety, driver distraction, and youth traffic safety education. Ms. Yager has been a key researcher for NHTSA, TxDOT, WTSC, H-GAC, and GDOT safety projects related to implementing a peer-to-peer young driver education program across the United States. Her major areas of expertise include teen traffic safety and driver distraction with a focus on traffic safety research.

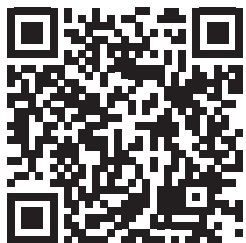
Ms. Yager oversees the data collection and analysis activities for the Youth Transportation Safety Program's annual student surveys, pre- and post-observation activities, a smartphone app that rewards young drivers for driving distraction-free and oversees the Teens in the Driver Seat program evaluations. Ms. Yager also helps with the research and development of educational outreach materials aimed to help young drivers increase safety amongst their peers. She is a Certified Peer Program Educator, serves as the Southeast Texas and Washington state Regional Representative to support schools that enroll in the Teens in the Driver Seat program, and regularly participates in community outreach events to promote traffic safety. Ms. Yager holds a B.S. and M.E. in Industrial & Systems Engineering from Texas A&M University.



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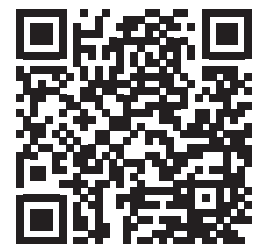
**Track 1  
Evaluation**



**Track 3  
Evaluation**



**Track 2  
Evaluation**



**Overall  
Forum  
Evaluation**