

Tuscarawas County Traffic Safety Survey Report

| 2017 |

REPORT CREATED FOR SAFE COMMUNITIES,
A PROGRAM OF THE TUSCARAWAS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

History of Safe Communities

The Federal Highway Safety Act of 1966 directed the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and the federal Highway Administration of the US Department of Transportation to jointly administer various highway safety projects (OTSO Traffic Safety Grant Proposal, 2016). While the Safe Communities program has been established for some time, the Tuscarawas County Health Department (TCHD) became a successful grantee in 2016. The purpose of the program is to develop a community approach via an established safety coalition to raise awareness and promote messages such as “Click it or Ticket”, “Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over”, “Watch Out for Motorcycles” and “Don’t Text and Drive”. Ultimately the aim of the program is to educate drivers which will hopefully lead to less fatal traffic accidents.

Available Data

As of August 6, 2017, year to date crash fatality difference in Tuscarawas County is +9 from 2016 to 2017 (Ohio State Highway Patrol). While the Safe Communities program conducts fatal crash reviews on a quarterly basis there has yet to be any trends or alterable circumstances that have led to the increased fatalities. Additional statistics are listed below:

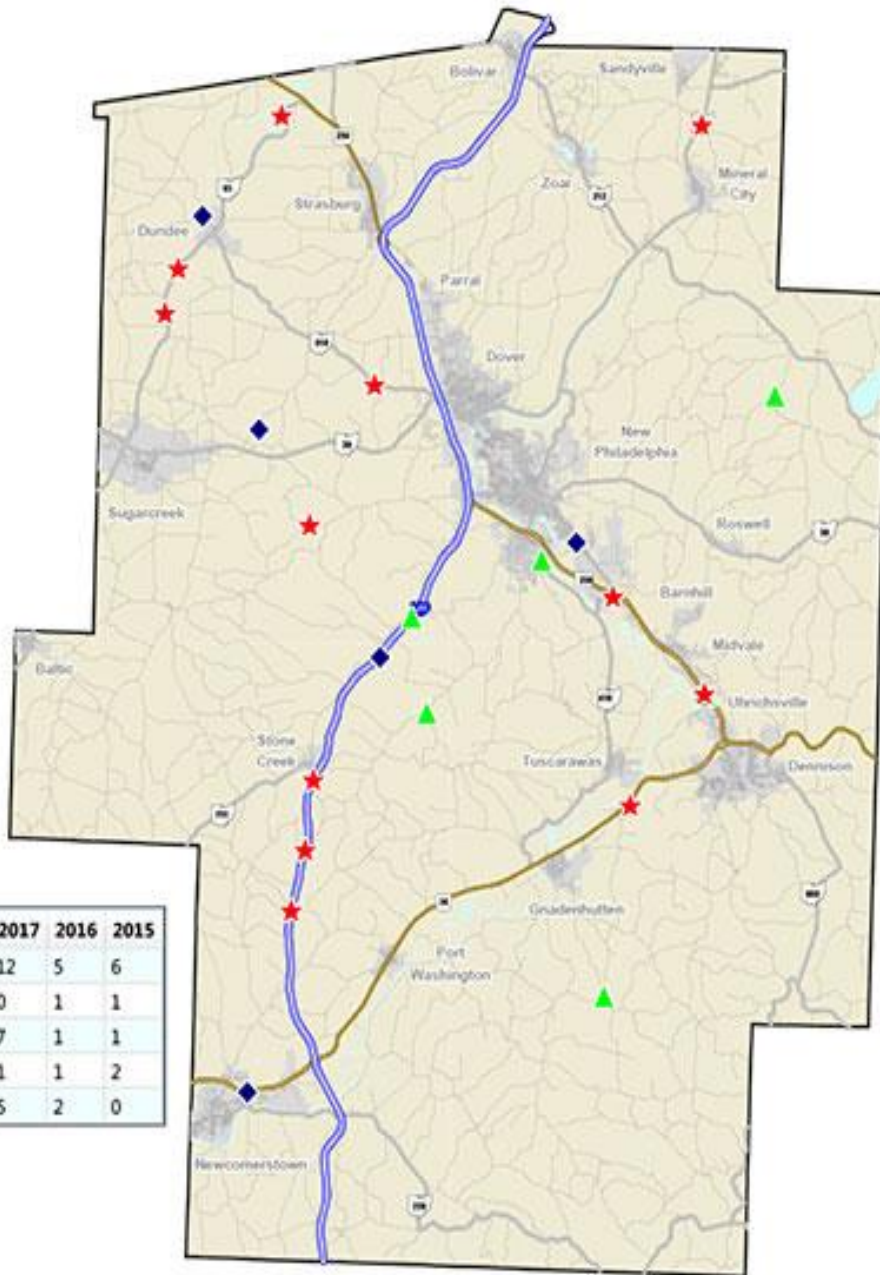
YTD Activity (As of 8/6/2017)	2017	2016
Enforcement Stops	5,547	4,943
Crashes Investigated	790	842
OVI Enforcements	181	163
Seat Belt Enforcements	1,250	1,351
Drug Violations	168	82

Data obtained from the Ohio State Highway Patrol

Tuscarawas County Fatal Traffic Crashes 2015 to 2017 YTD

Fatal Crashes
 ★ 2017 (12)
 ◆ 2016 (6)
 ▲ 2015 (7)

Type	2017	2016	2015
# Rural	12	5	6
# Urban	0	1	1
# OVI Related	7	1	1
# Commercial Related	1	1	2
# Motorcycle Related	5	2	0



Data Source: OSHP LINCIS Database
 Map Design and Layout: OSHP Statistical Analysis Unit
 Ohio State Highway Patrol
 August 8, 2017



The Survey

In August 2017 an online survey was created to obtain additional traffic safety information. The survey aimed to obtain data, gain additional insights and generate new ideas on how to improve traffic safety that could be shared with the Safe Communities Coalition from drivers in Tuscarawas County. The survey was generated via an online link and was open to the public for approximately two weeks. The target audience was any one who spent time driving in Tuscarawas County. Distribution was done via Safe Community Coalition members, direct emails containing the survey link to partners and stakeholders and via several social media posts inviting public participation. The survey contained the following qualitative and quantitative questions:

1. What do you feel are the largest safety concerns in Tuscarawas County?
(You may choose more than one answer)
 - a. Unsafe child restraints
 - b. Lack of seat belt use
 - c. Unsafe roadways
 - d. Motorcycle safety
 - e. Speeding
 - f. Driving under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol
 - g. Texting and driving or distracted driving
 - h. Other; please specify
2. What are the top 2 actions that could be taken by Tuscarawas County to reduce your above concerns?
3. What area (road, intersections, etc) of Tuscarawas County do you feel are most dangerous to motorist and why?
4. What could be done to improve the above locations?
5. How often do you wear your seat belt?
 - a. Regularly
 - b. Sometimes
 - c. Rarely
 - d. Never
6. I utilize my cell phone to read/send texts, emails or internet browse while driving.
 - a. Regularly
 - b. Sometimes
 - c. Rarely
 - d. Never

7. In the past 30 days did you drive while under the influence of drugs or alcohol?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
8. What do you feel is the biggest danger/concern for motorcyclist in Tuscarawas County?
9. How often do you drive 5-10 mph over the speed limit?
 - a. Regularly
 - b. Sometimes
 - c. Rarely
 - d. Never
10. Traffic safety in Tuscarawas County is a concern for me.
 - a. Strongly Agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Neutral
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly Disagree

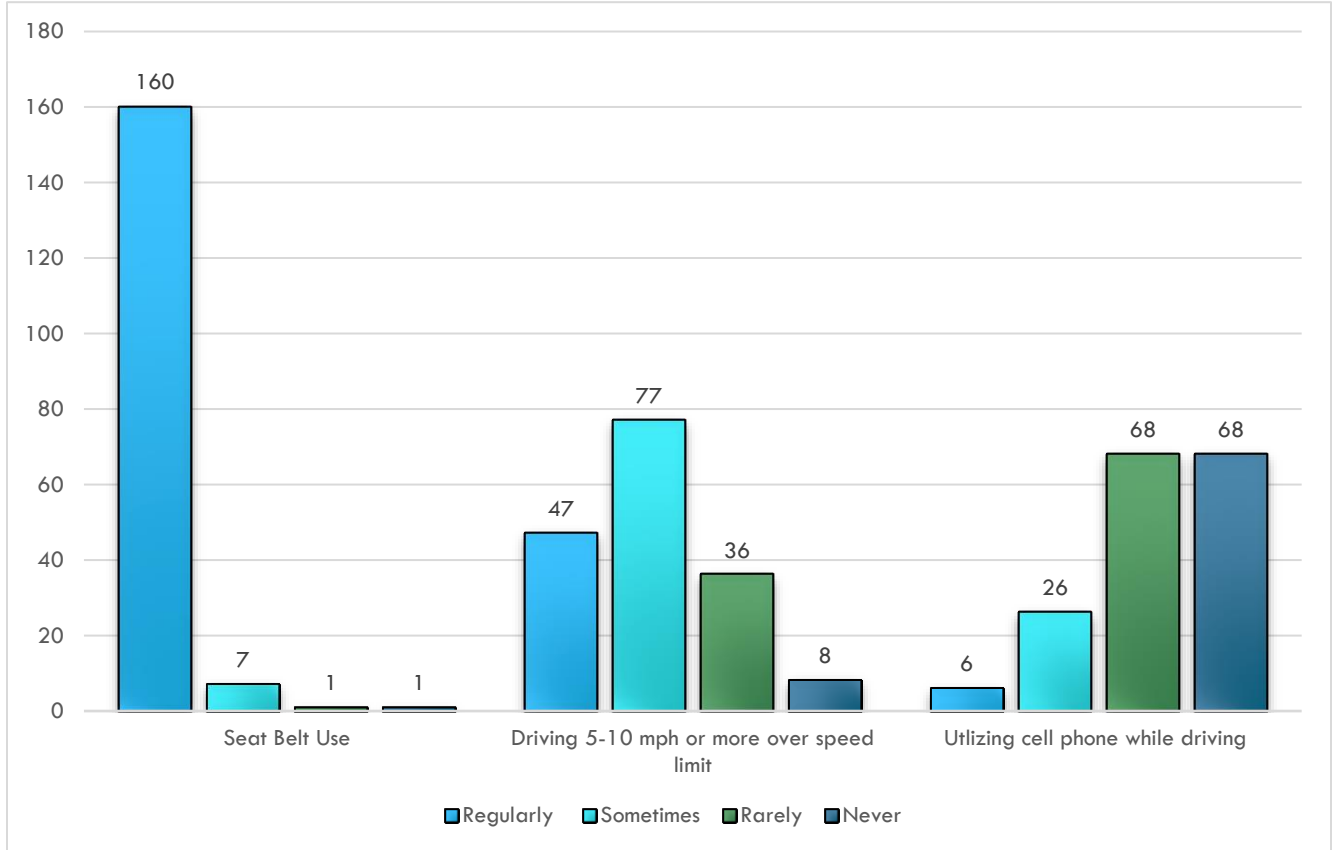
Results

A total of 171 responses were received. Aside from the assumption that participants were regular or frequent drivers in Tuscarawas County no further demographics were collected. Of the 171 respondents, 126 persons or (73.69%) strongly agreed or agreed that traffic safety in Tuscarawas County was a concern for them. 37 respondents (21.64%) felt neutral about traffic safety, while 8 (4.68%) strongly disagreed or disagreed that traffic safety was concerning.

Risky Behaviors

Participants were asked about risky behaviors that they engaged in while driving.

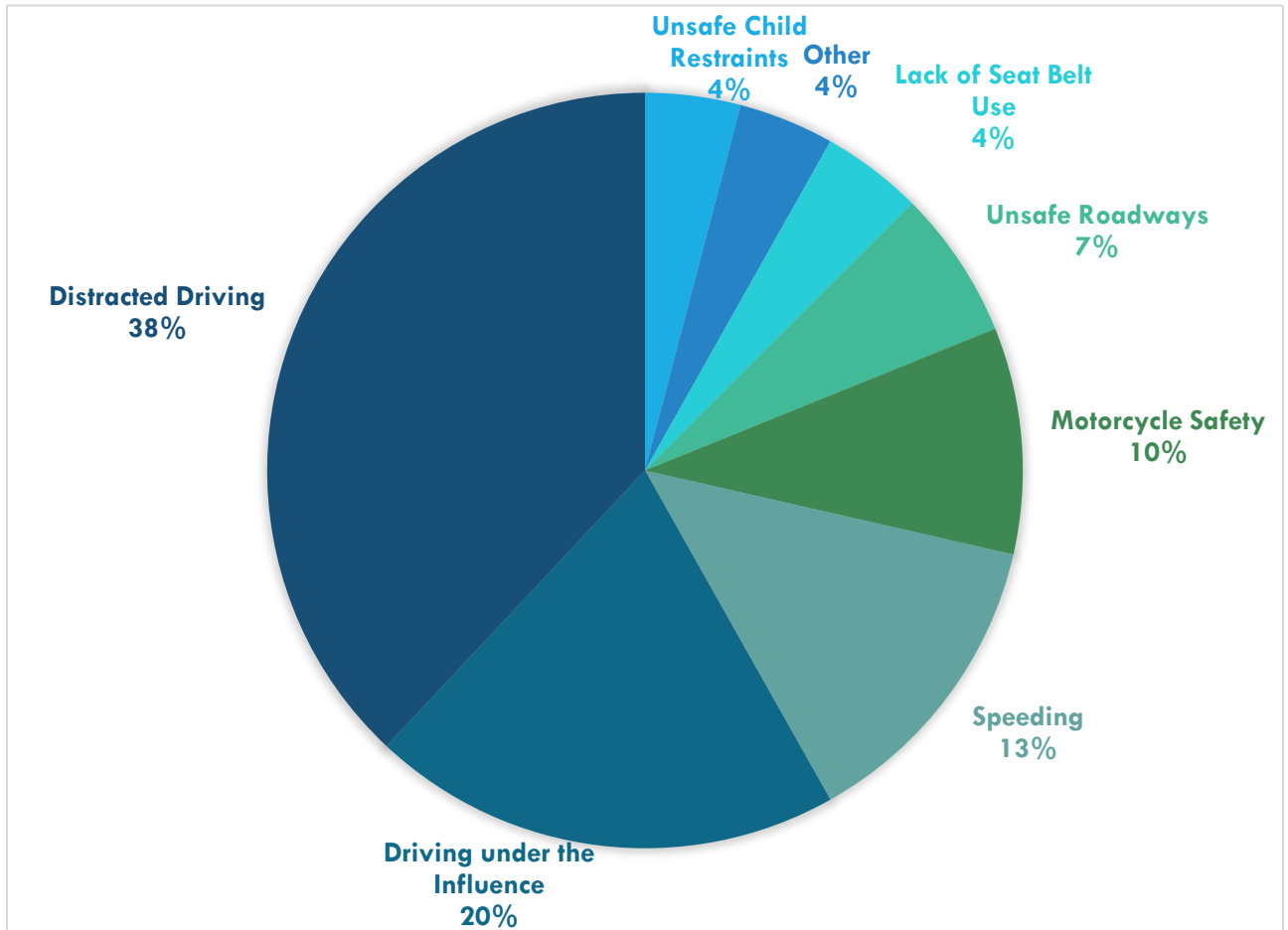
Results highlighted below:



Almost 95% of respondents stated that they always wear their seat belts. Alternatively, almost 75% of respondents stated that they always or sometimes drive 5-10 mph over the speed limit. Utilizing a cell phone while driving was reported less frequently with approximately 19% of persons stating they regularly or sometimes utilize a cell phone while driving. 100% of respondents stated that they had not driven while under the influence of drugs or alcohol in the past 30 days.

Traffic Safety Concerns

Participants were asked to identify the largest safety concerns in Tuscarawas County as they relate to traffic safety. More than one concern could be selected from the list.



Distracted driving was selected 149 times, followed by driving under the influence which was selected 79 times, and then speeding which was selected 52 times. A total of 16 persons choose the category of “other” as a concern. Those persons were asked to elaborate and the most common trends included pedestrian and bicycle safety.

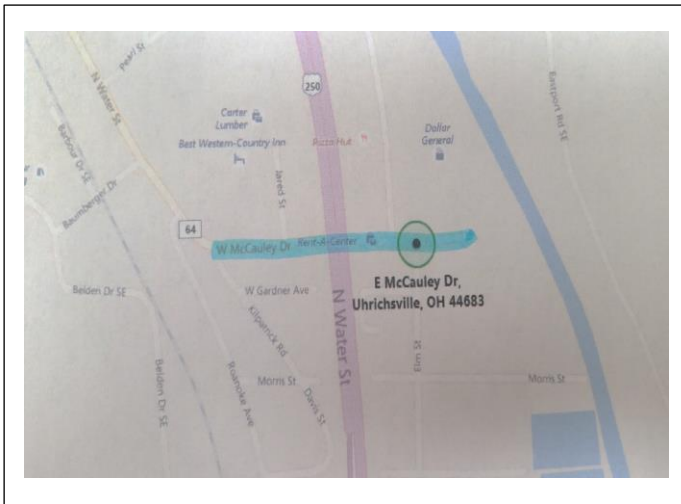
Road, Intersections, and Other Geographical Areas of Concern

A text box was provided for participants to enter a narrative or list areas of geographical concern. The most common trend words included “Route 250, Wooster Avenue, Crooked Run, West High Intersection and New Philadelphia Buehler’s”. A further analysis was completed to identify common areas of concern and resulted in the following list:

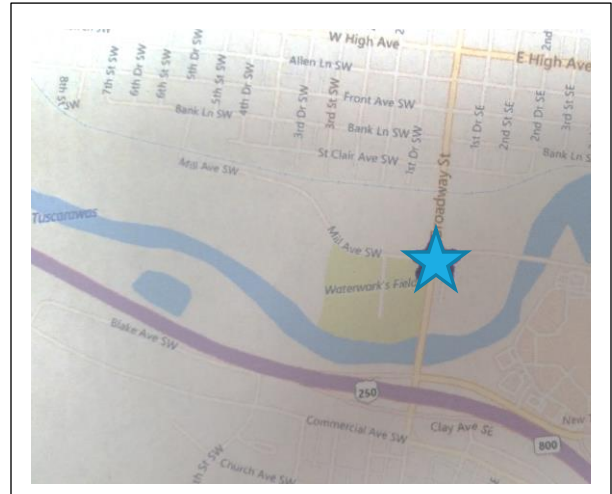
General Concerns:

- Rural Roads (noted by 17 participants)
- State Route 250; numerous locations noted (noted by 16 participants)
- Interstate 77; numerous locations noted (noted by 16 participants)

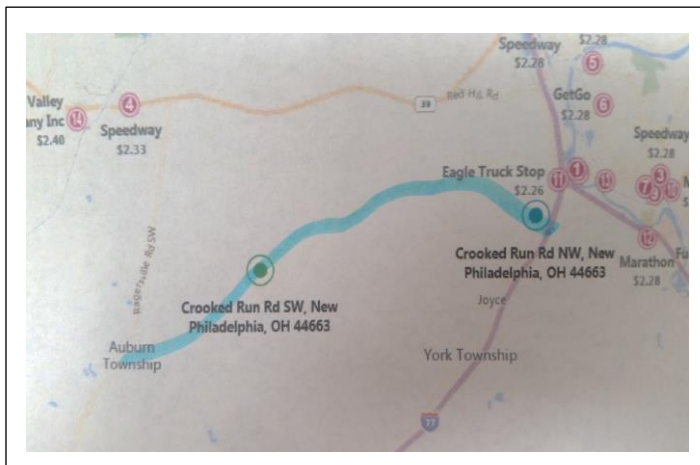
Specific Locations:



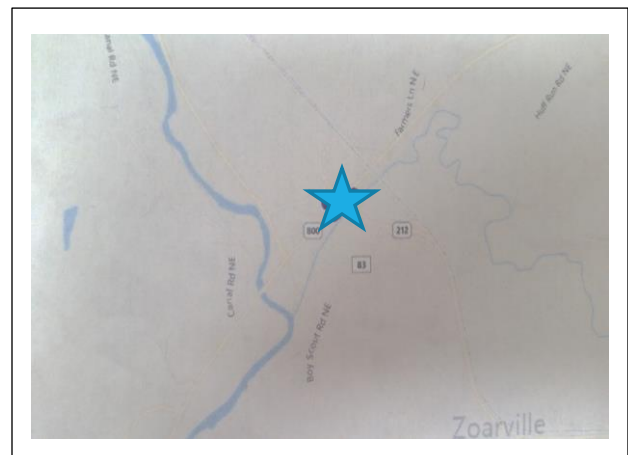
McCauley Drive



Broadway and Mill Intersection



Crooked Run Road



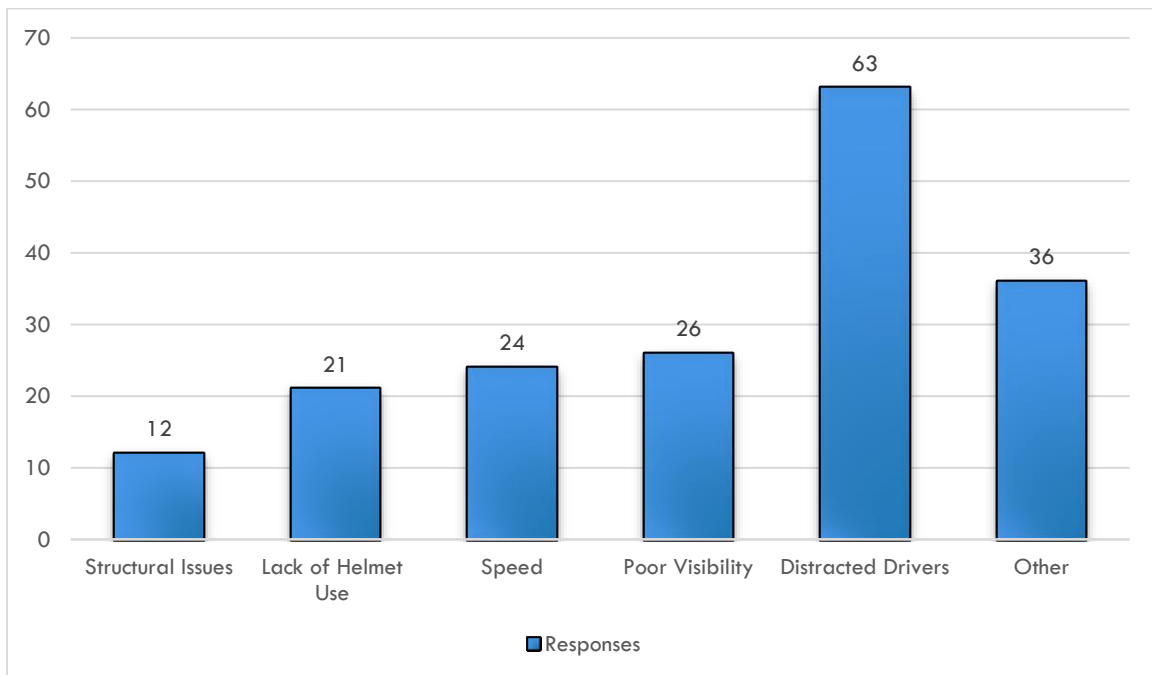
Route 800/200 Intersection

Suggested Improvements

Following the question regarding geographical areas of concern, participants were then asked the open-ended question “what could be done to improve the above locations”. Common word trends included “bicycle lanes, increased signage, increased patrol and better enforcement”. 25 participants responded suggesting an enforcement approach such as more police presence, strict enforcements, installation of cameras, and more frequent ticketing of offenders. 33 participants responded with a structural suggestion such as trimming or removing trees and shrubs near problem intersections, widening narrow roads, addition of crosswalks and bicycle lanes, increased signage or flashing lights leading to an intersection, paving roads, or installing speed bumps.

Threats to Motorcyclists

Common words that were included in responses to an open ended question regarding threats to motorcyclists involved “helmets, visibility, lack of driver attention, blind spots and speed”. Out of the 182 suggested threats to motorcyclists in Tuscarawas County the following 6 categories were generally developed:

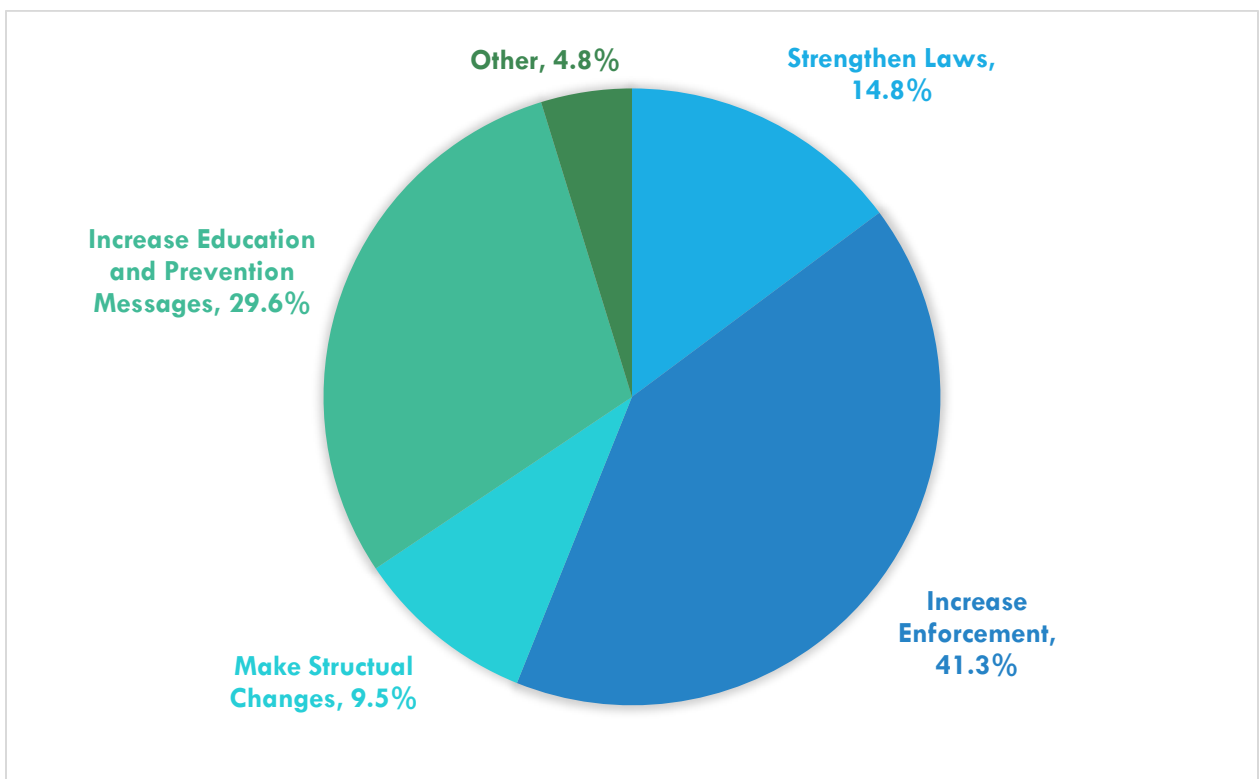


- Structural issues such as poorly paved roads (12 responses or 6.6%)
- Lack of helmet use (21 responses or 11.5%)

- Speed, either by the motorcycle or vehicle (24 responses or 13.2%)
- Poor visibility (26 responses or 14.3%)
- Other (36 responses or 19.8%)
- Distracted drivers (63 responses or 34.6%)

Next Steps

Participants were also asked to help to develop potential solutions to the problems by suggesting one or two action steps that could be taken to reduce traffic safety concerns. Again, general categories emerged from the open ended question.



Responses included:

- Increase enforcement (78 responses or 41.3%)
- Increasing education and prevention messages (56 responses or 29.6%)
- Strengthen laws (28 responses or 14.8%)
- Make structural changes (18 responses or 9.5%)
- Other (9 responses or 4.8%)

The Safe Communities Coalition focuses on prevention and awareness messaging and thus a closer look was taken at the suggestions with a prevention/education focus.

- Have a teen driving safety event
- Increase signs urging drivers not to text and drive, especially on busy roads
- Increase awareness at bars/clubs and restaurants
- Promote hands free apps
- Increase billboard messages
- Have education check-points
- Increase social media campaigns
- More teen education
- More signs to watch out for motorcycles
- Campaigns on seat belt use and proper child restraints
- Ad campaigns
- More training for motorcycle drivers
- Public service announcements
- Promote messages in schools, libraries, festivals, and other public places
- More education about what actually happens in a crash
- Start with elementary school students so they can remind their parents
- More powerful messages needed

Conclusion

Based on the survey results it is evident that the majority of respondents do care about traffic safety in Tuscarawas County. The largest risky behavior that individuals engage in include speeding followed by distracted driving. Interestingly, these are the very topics that respondents describe as the largest problems and threats to motorists in the County. Overall, survey participants would like to see increased enforcement coupled with prevention education and awareness/public campaigns surrounding traffic safety messages. The Safe Communities coalition should continue to promote messages and look for unique ways to reach drivers. Suggestions listed above from survey participants are worth exploring and potentially implemented. Geographical problem areas identified as a result of this survey should also be examined for structural improvements, better enforcement or the location for increased safety messaging.