



CHAPTER 2: PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

INTRODUCTION

Community feedback is a vital component of any planning process. It enables the Transportation Safety Action Planning Team to understand the concerns of those affected and ensures the plan aligns with their needs. Additionally, fostering a space for the community to share their input strengthens project support, making it easier to implement safety recommendations effectively. The insights gathered are the foundation for the plan’s goals and recommendations. Public engagement for the Tahlequah Transportation Safety Action Plan included the following participation opportunities:

- Safety Steering Committee (SSC)
- Tahlequah Safety Day
- Public Workshops
- Public Hearing to City Council
- Online Engagement

PROJECT TIMELINE

The Tahlequah TSAP kicked off in December 2024, and the planning process lasted until May 2025. **Figure 1** below presents a timeline for the SSC meetings.

FIGURE 1. PROJECT TIMELINE



SAFETY STEERING COMMITTEE

The Safety Steering Committee (SSC) served as the guiding body throughout the planning process, building consensus and taking ownership of the Plan while providing critical feedback at key project milestones. The SSC was comprised of City Staff from various departments, as well as representatives from local organizations. The SSC Meetings were held on the following days:

- **Meeting 1:** Kick-off & Goal Setting – January 13, 2025
- **Meeting 2:** High-Injury Network Results/Equity Analysis – February 10, 2025
- **Meeting 3:** Implementation Plan – March 3, 2025
- **Meeting 4:** Draft TSAP Review – March 24, 2025
- **Meeting 5:** Plan Adoption & Celebration – April 14, 2025

Members of the SSC serve as advocates of the plan process and champions for the plan throughout the implementation phase. During the first SSC Meeting, a mission statement was developed to outline the plan’s mission and establish a commitment to serving stakeholders and the community at large:



The SSC engaged in various activities, including a SWOT analysis, selection of study corridors, HIN refinement, development of the action matrix, and prioritization of actions. Additionally, the SSC established a clear target for reducing roadway fatalities and severe injuries, as outlined in the City’s Vision Zero Ordinance, stating:

“The City of Tahlequah commits to reducing traffic fatalities by 50% by 2035, and 100% by 2050.”

In April, the SSC marked the completion of the planning process and transitioned into the implementation phase, continuing efforts to eliminate fatalities and serious injuries on Tahlequah’s roadways.

IN-PERSON EVENTS

TAHLEQUAH ROAD SAFETY DAY

In February 2025, the City of Tahlequah hosted the “Tahlequah Road Safety Day” for residents and road users to learn more about the TSAP and provide input on the future of safety for drivers, pedestrians, and cyclists in the City. Attendees had the opportunity to talk with the project team about transportation safety improvements that would mitigate crashes. Additionally, the City invited various community organizations that sponsored the event with door prizes, refreshments, and informational materials to enhance community support for the event. The event was very successful and resulted in over 70 community members of all ages attending.

DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS WORKSHOP

On April 5th, 2025, the Planning Team hosted a pop-up event during the Crawfish Festival event in Downtown Tahlequah.

This subsection will be completed closer to the event.

PUBLIC HEARING TO CITY COUNCIL

The Consultant Team held one public hearing opportunity with the City Council on April 7, 2025. This public hearing served as the final opportunity for council members and the public to provide comments on the final report before it was adopted by the City Council

FIGURE 2. PHOTOS FROM TAHLEQUAH ROAD SAFETY DAY



ONLINE ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement involved collaboration, input, and involvement from a broad cross-section of community members and project stakeholders. The plan utilized a combination of in-person and online outreach opportunities to maximize public and stakeholder input and solidify the vision for the future. The online portion of community engagement began with the launch and introduction of the project website, which provided foundational information about the purpose and process and an opportunity for comments through an interactive project area map and written survey. The website was available and updated from January through March to keep the public informed and up to date.



Overall, the responses throughout the process highlight the community’s desire for a safer, more efficient, and more pedestrian-friendly city with efficient transit options. Addressing these issues through targeted infrastructure upgrades, better traffic management, and enhanced enforcement could significantly enhance safety and improve accessibility for all road users.

FIGURE 3. PROJECT WEBSITE LANDING PAGE

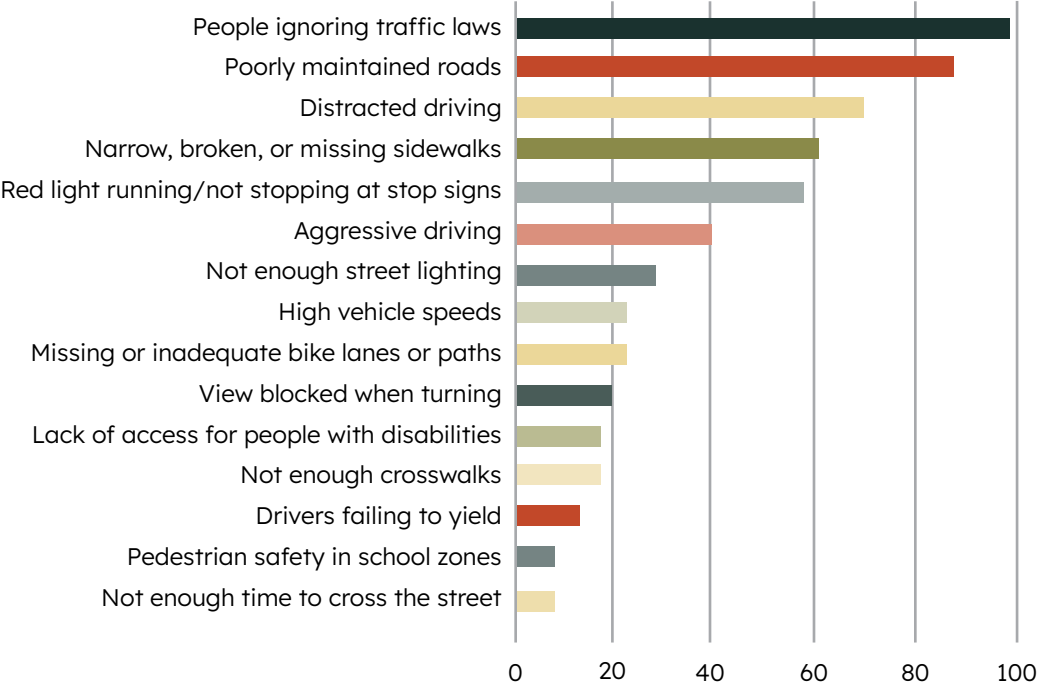


WRITTEN SURVEY

The Written Survey was distributed on the project website and at in-person engagement events to collect information on demographics, mode choice, and roadway safety concerns. The survey comprised 24 questions and was divided into four sections. Of the 194 received survey responses, most households reported having no work commute or commuting 0-20 minutes to their place of work. The top reporting age group for the written survey was those aged 30-44, while most respondents indicated their household as having 1-3 cars. Additionally, the top safety concerns for participants included ignoring traffic laws, poorly maintained roads, and distracted driving. Key insights from the written survey included:

- **Pedestrian Safety – 89% of respondents** support investing in making walking safer by creating more sidewalks, mid-block crossings, high-visibility crosswalks, and other safety countermeasures.
- **Public Transportation – 6.7% of respondents** reported using transit in the last two years in Tahlequah.
- **Bicycling Safety – 69% of respondents** support investing in making bicycling safer by creating more bike lanes and separation from vehicle traffic.
- **Enforcement & Education – 73% of respondents** support funding for educational programs for driver safety and enhanced enforcement.
- **Infrastructure & Car Dependency – Over 50% of respondents** indicated issues with people ignoring traffic laws while driving, inciting great support for educational programs and greater enforcement.

FIGURE 4. TOP SAFETY CONCERNS IN TAHLEQUAH

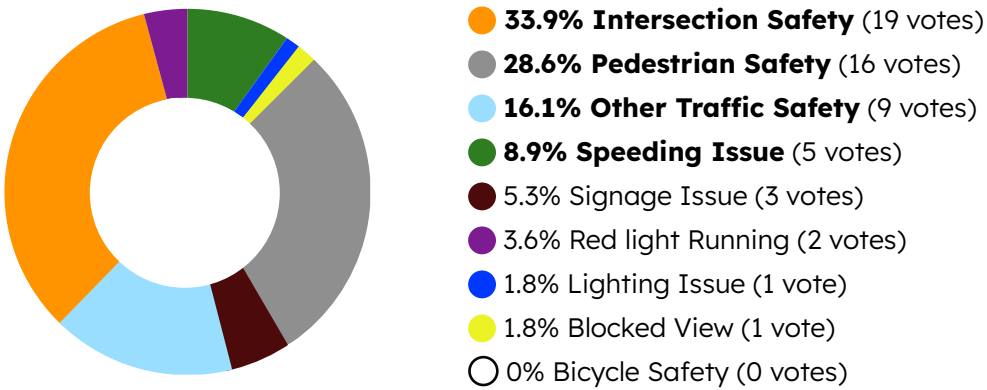


MAP SURVEY

Residents and stakeholders were encouraged to provide feedback on the safety conditions of existing roadways with an interactive map survey. This engagement tool enabled website visitors to identify specific locations throughout the City that related to nine comment topics like speeding issues, visibility concerns, intersection safety, and several others. Once the location and topic were identified, respondents could leave detailed comments regarding their concerns, potential resolutions, or ideas. The results of the map survey identified several key insights, including:

- **Intersection Safety (34%):** Dangerous intersections were identified as needing traffic lights, stop signs, or roundabouts.
- **Pedestrian Safety (29%):** Respondents identified a need for better infrastructure like sidewalks, crosswalks, and pedestrian signals.
- **Speeding (9%):** Major concerns related to vehicular speeds were identified near schools, residential areas, and busy intersections.

FIGURE 5. MAP SURVEY TOP SAFETY CONCERNS IN TAHLEQUAH



In addition to some key insights that emerged, various geographic locations were identified as hotspots or areas with significant comment volume. Several of the key areas of concern identified include:

- **Muskogee Avenue:** Intersection safety and issues with turn lanes.
- **Downing Street:** High traffic and access management issues.
- **Fourth Street:** Reports of speeding along with pedestrian safety concerns in portions with no sidewalks.
- **Highway 51/Bypass:** Multiple requests for dedicated turn lanes at intersections with Stick Ross Road, Parkhill Road and Muskogee Avenue.
- **Areas Near Schools:** Concerns over speeding and pedestrian safety on multiple streets in the vicinity of Tahlequah High School and Greenwood Elementary.

FIGURE 6. MAP SURVEY COMMENTS

