

# Texas A&M Transportation Institute

*The Intersection of Human Trafficking  
with  
Transportation*



**John Habermann, P.E.**

April 26, 2024

# Define Terms

Victim – someone who is being trafficked.

Survivor – someone who is no longer being trafficked.

DOT = Department of Transportation

Johns   perpetrator – abuser – criminal

Prevention-**Disruption**-Prosecution-**Healing**

# Today's Session: What Are You Doing Here?

- Intention of this presentation is to outline the benefits of transportation organizations and increase participation of transportation organizations being involved with the prevention and disruption, healing of human trafficking.
- **PART PROGRESS and PART PLOTS**
- Encourage Pragmatic Passion
- Parable of the Talents

# Example stories

- Pedestrian
- Hotel
- Truck Stop
- Bridge Project

# Transportation

Therefore, those in the transportation industry have a responsibility in the fight against human trafficking.

“Great indeed are our opportunities; great also are our responsibilities.” William Wilberforce

# Transportation Travel Modes

- Passenger Vehicle
- Pick-ups
- Trucks
- Airplanes
- Trains
- Subways
- Buses
- Boats / Ferries

- Borders
- Rest Areas
- Others?



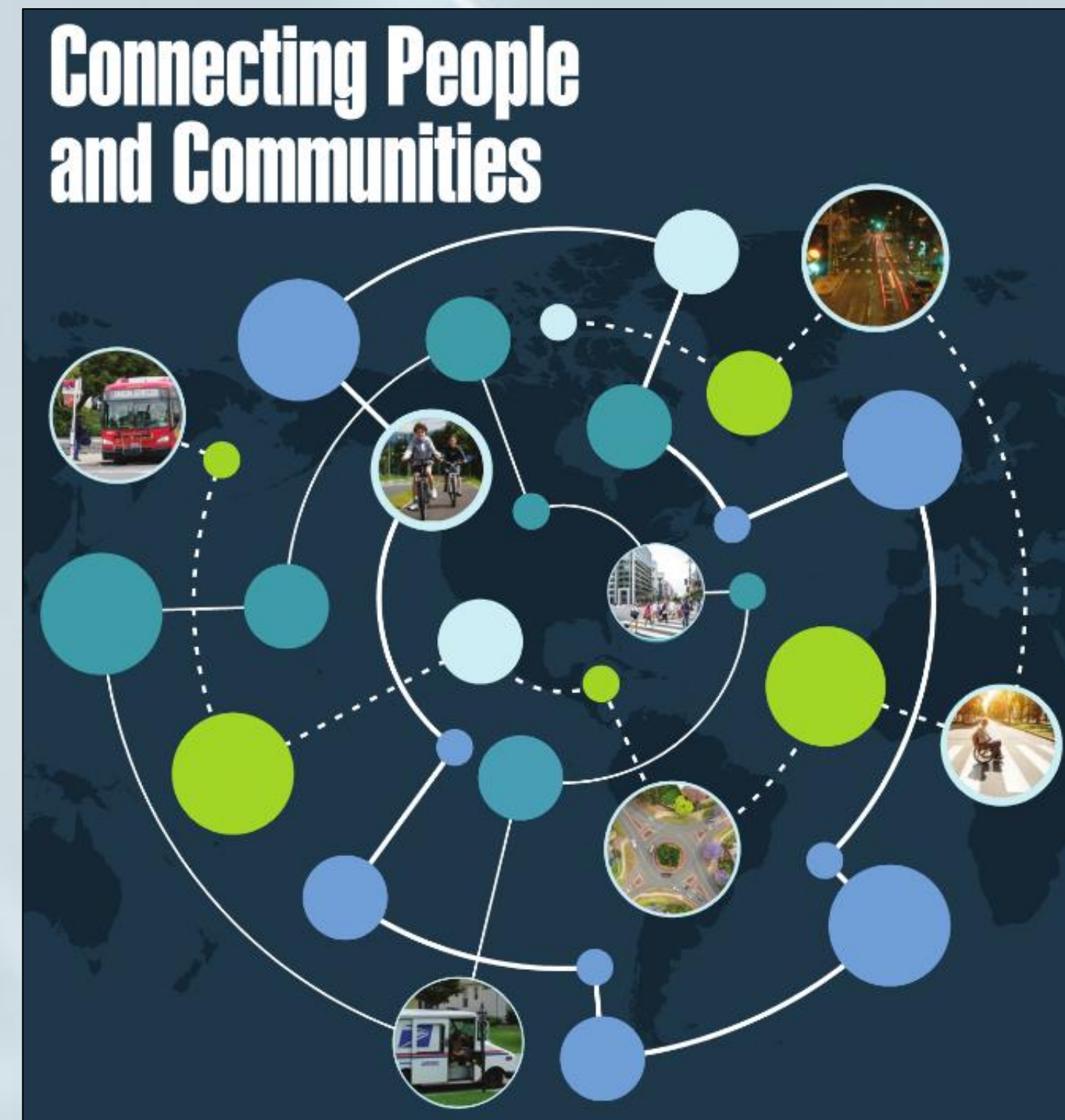
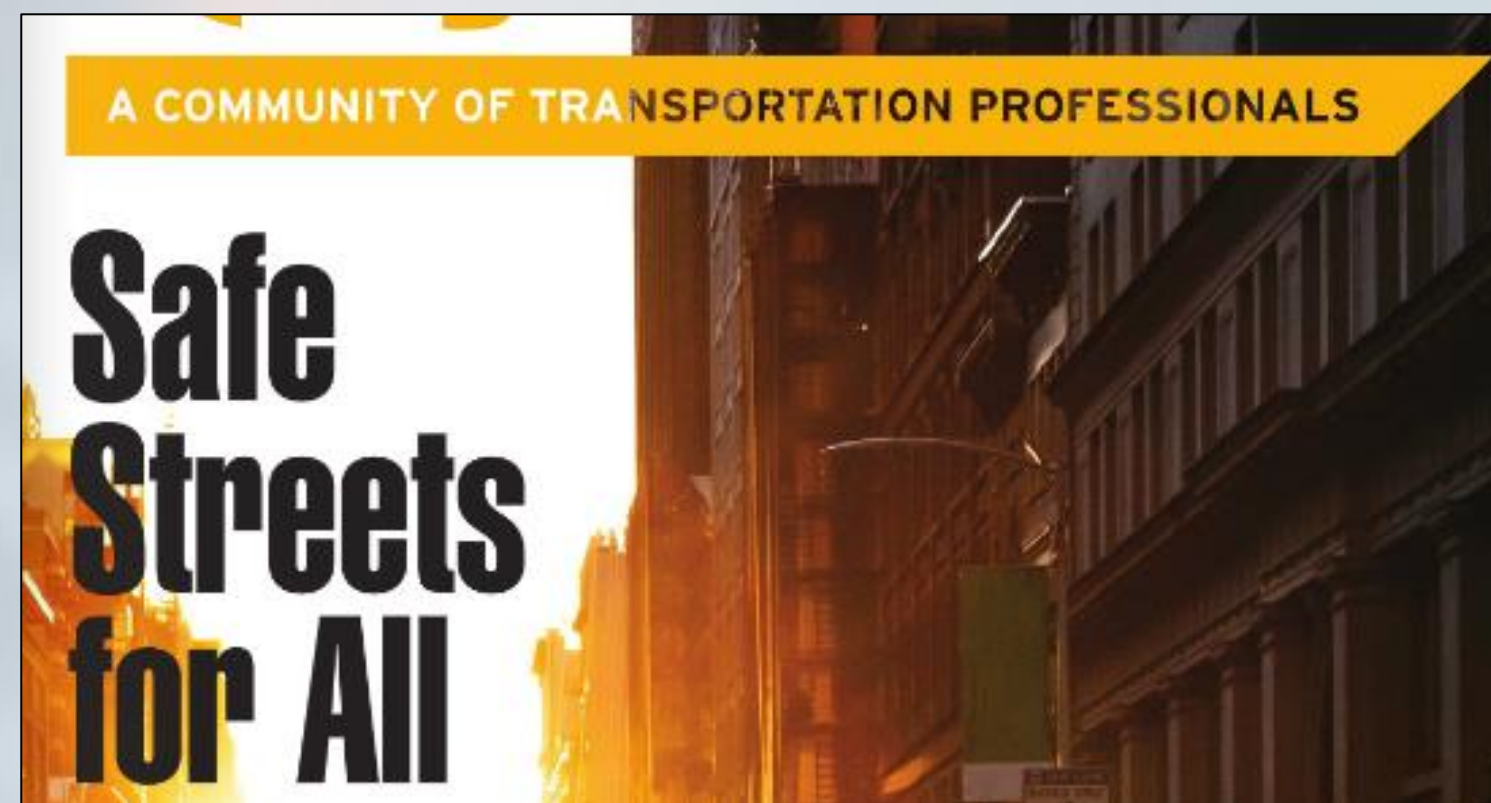
# Previous Answers

Is there a travel mode you can think of that was not listed?

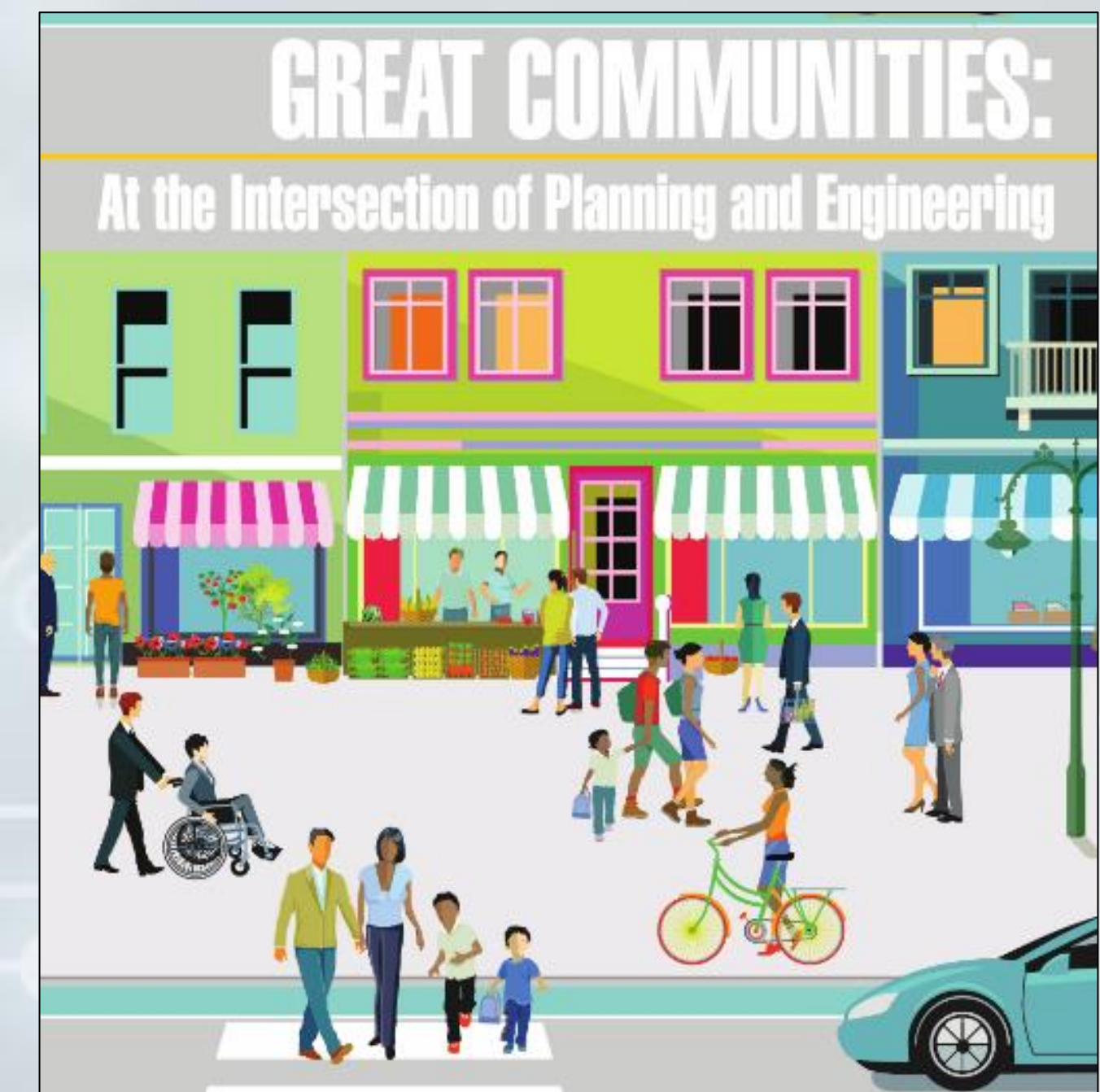
pedestrian u-haul  
moving trucks  
streetcar boxcars trailer  
e-bike scooter  
taxi horse vans  
semitrucks

# Community

- Safe
- Livable
- Vibrant
- Other Attributes?



**To Save Lives and Create Healthy Communities:  
An ITE Member's Responsibilities**



**THRIVING  
COMMUNITIES  
PROGRAM**





# Benefits of a State DOT being Part of the Fight



# PARTNER with US

HEAVY HITTING

TAP IN:

DOTs have a CULTURE of SAFETY, SUSTAINABILITY + TRAINING

WE HAVE MASSIVE TRAINING SYSTEMS FOR TEACHING OUR TEAMS AND CONTRACTORS.



TEXAS HAS 24K DOT EYES

MAKE US MORE POWERFUL  
EXTEND YOUR REACH

READY TO PROVIDE DATA + VISIBILITY TO LAW ENFORCEMENT

TRUCK STOP VIDEO

WHAT DO WE DO WHEN WE SOMETHING SUSPICIOUS?  
TRAINING REQUIRED.

WHO IS THIS OUT OF PLACE PERSON?

STEWARDS OF DATA

STEWARDS OF LAND

HELP US BE SMART about

SEE SOMETHING SAY SOMETHING.

We're Trying to Do this for Society

SAFE  
LIVABLE  
VIBRANT

CONNECTING PEOPLE + COMMUNITIES

HEALTHY



TRAFFICKING RUNS COUNTER TO OUR GOALS

TRAFFICKING BUSINESS MODELS USE TRANSPORTATION

TRANSPORTATION IS FOR ALL, BUT TRAFFICKERS USE IT AS A MEANS OF RESTRAINT.



FEDERAL D.O.T. LEADING THE WAY

GRANTS + TRAINING

PEDESTRIAN TAUGHT JOHN H. A LOT



JOHN LOVES TEXAS D.O.T. COALITION INVOLVEMENT.

JOHN HABERMANN P.E.

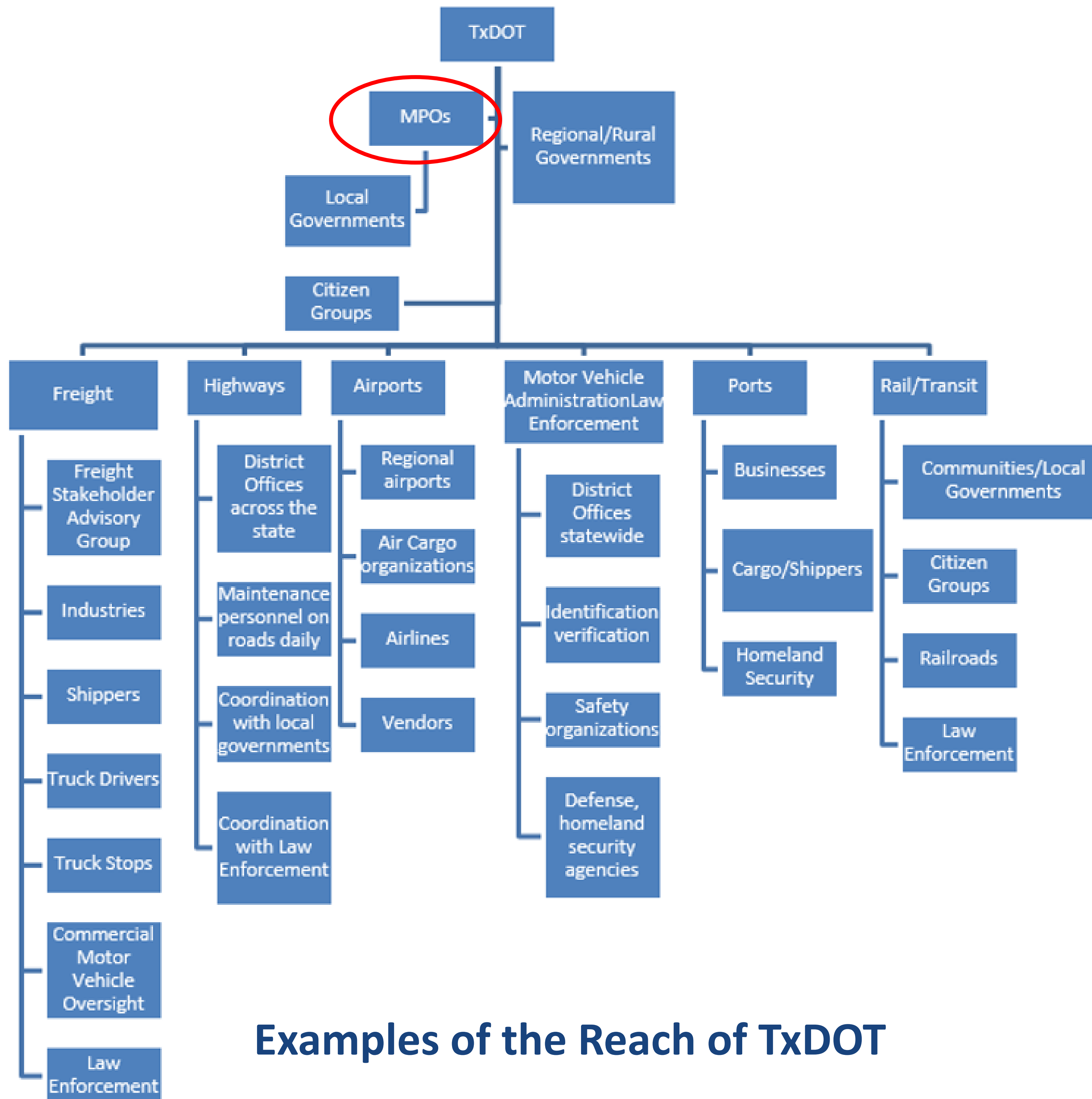


LET'S ANALYZE WEB TRAFFIC STATS THE BAD ONES

# Benefits of State DOTs being Part of the Fight

- Partnerships
- Agency workers hold an array of positions
  - Diverse geographies
  - Safety-oriented workforce
  - Frontline
  - Interaction with state legislatures and governors
- You can train / teach DOT employees
- A culture of guidelines / rule implementation
- Large inventory of public spaces
- Stewards of data
- The majority of the business models used by traffickers intersect with transportation systems





## Examples of the Reach of TxDOT

# Contractors (Highway)

- Subcontractors
- Established political channels
- Labor force
- Safety-oriented
- A system of training / updates
- Another touch point for state DOTs to assist



# University Researchers

- Process data
- Bring together best / current practices
- Determine where gaps exist
- Develop training aids
- Channels to leverage each other's work
- Know how to work on committees
- Write papers, journal articles, and thought pieces



# Some Work to Date

- New Transportation Research Board [www.trb.org](http://www.trb.org)
- State DOT anti-trafficking coalition
- Funding for research
- (Federal Transit Administration, Federal Highway Administration, Tribal Nations, National Cooperative Research Program)
- Truckers Against Trafficking
- US DOT National Outreach Survey for Transportation
- NCHRP 20-121 / NCHRP 20-121A
- Journal Articles



# Awareness / Presentations / Articles / Podcasts

**NOT IN MY CITY.**  
**END HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN OUR COMMUNITY.**

You can help. You can get help.

**DO YOU FEEL TRAPPED?**

Victims of human trafficking are protected under state and federal law. Las leyes de Texas y Estados Unidos protegen a las víctimas de la trata de personas.

You may be a victim if...

- You are not free to come and go as you wish.
- You are involved in the commercial sex industry (prostitution, stripping, pornography) and have a pimp/manager or are under 18.
- You do not have control over your personal documents or money.
- You were recruited to your job through false promises.
- You are forced to provide labor or commercial sex.

**DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO IS?**

Tú puedes ser una víctima si...

- No tienes la libertad de salir cuando desees del lugar donde tu encuentras.
- Estás involucrado en la industria comercial sexual (prostitución, club de striptease, dama de compañía), tienes una proxeneta (pimp)/jefe o eres menor de 18 años.
- No tienes control de tus documentos personales o dinero.
- Fuiste reclutado para trabajar a través de falsas promesas.
- Estás obligado a proporcionar mano de obra o sexo comercial.

**1-888-373-7888**


**Or text HELP or INFO to BeFREE (233733)**  
**Confidential | Toll-Free | 24/7 | Multilingual**

The National Human Trafficking Hotline is available to answer calls from anywhere in the country. The NHTRC is not a law enforcement or immigration authority.




This flyer was produced by Unbound under 2019-VT-85-K039, awarded by the Office for Victims of Crime, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this flyer are those of the contributors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

**ON THE ROAD TO END HUMAN TRAFFICKING**  
 KNOW. WATCH. REPORT.



IT'S IN OUR COMMUNITY  
**CALL 888-373-7888**

24/7 | Toll-Free | Confidential

NOT a substitute for ending human trafficking as part of a dedicated community including the Texas Secretary's Commission for Human and Child Sex Trafficking Team, state and federal agencies, and industry partners.

**ON THE ROAD TO END HUMAN TRAFFICKING**  
 KNOW. WATCH. REPORT.

**CALL 888-373-7888**  
 24/7 | Toll-free | Confidential

**Trafficking red flags**

- Victim forced to perform sexual acts.
- Victim does not have freedom of movements.
- Victim or family threatened with harm for attempts to escape.
- Victim threatened with deportation or law enforcement action.
- Victim harmed or deprived of food, water, sleep, medical care or other life necessities.
- Victim cannot freely contact friends or family.
- Victim is a juvenile engaged in commercial sex.
- Victim not allowed to socialize or attend religious services.
- Victim coached on what to say to law enforcement and immigration officials.
- Victim recruited for one purpose and forced to engage in some other job.



**INDUSTRY UPDATE**

## The Contribution of State and Local DOTs to Disrupting Human Trafficking

By JOHN HABERMANN, P.E. (M), ELIZABETH SUÁREZ, CHRISTI WIGLE, STEVEN JONES, PH.D., SILVANA V. CROOPE, PH.D., ENV SP, RON HALL, MARGO HILL, AND CHRIS BAGLIN, JD, MPH

The transportation engineering profession is devoted to providing a transportation system that is safe and secure for all users. The system, however, is often abused by those seeking to maximize their own gain—whether through operating grossly overweight trucks to increase shipping profits or to engage in illicit activities such as human trafficking. The Polaris Project, an international organization devoted to combatting human trafficking, identifies the transportation industry as one of the most important components of the human trafficking enterprise.<sup>1</sup> Data from the IBM Traffic Analysis Hub indicate that of the 3,019 trafficking events recorded in the United States from March 2020 to February 2021, almost 2,400 involved a form of surface transportation (i.e., car, truck, or bus), with the remaining involving air travel or seaports and waterways.<sup>2</sup>



# Transportation for Healing

- Bus service
- Rural service
- Subway
- Help getting home
- Gainful employment
- Behavioral and mental health services / benefits

# Action Steps

- Pass out a poster
- Fold clothes
- Attend another meeting
- Connect local coalitions with the transportation industry
- Connect local coalitions to university researchers
- Inform awareness and policies to contribute to prevention and disruption

# Mantra

**IF YOU SEE SOMETHING**

**SAY SOMETHING**

## Contributors and Sources for more information:

Ms. Tara Alston

Tara.Alston@dot.ohio.gov



**John A. Habermann, P.E.**

**Texas A&M Transportation Institute**

510 N. Valley Mills Dr.

Waco, TX 77807

j-habermann@tti.tamu.edu

512-994-9450

**Follow us on social media**

