

APPENDIX B

IOWA SMS PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY SUMMARY FINDINGS

APPENDIX B

Iowa SMS Public Opinion Survey Summary Findings

KEY TOPICS

- demographics
- drivers
- emergency response
- highway design
- public opinion
- special users

INTRODUCTION

The *Iowa Strategic Highway Safety Plan Goals and Strategies: Statewide Survey of Adults* survey (2000) was commissioned by the Iowa Safety Management System (Iowa SMS) to help gauge the level of public support for a number of potential traffic safety strategies. The survey was conducted by the Center for Social and Behavioral Research at the University of Northern Iowa by Gene Lutz, Melvin Gonnerman, Jr., and Mary E. Losch, with the assistance of Amy Drymon, Stephanie Ingram, and Sarah Stoeber.

The major content of the survey is drawn from the 1999 Iowa SMS *Iowa Strategic Highway Safety Plan* draft, which addresses a wide range of highway safety concerns in 25 emphasis areas. It was not the intent of the survey for respondents to judge or measure performance of any traffic safety related entity or program. Further, respondents were not asked to prioritize traffic safety strategies with other kinds of highway improvement needs.

The results of this survey will assist in prioritizing the expenditures of traffic safety improvement funds and may identify potential changes in state law and department policies, standards, and programs. This document, *Iowa SMS Public Opinion Survey: Summary Findings*, reports the key findings.

METHODOLOGY

- The survey population consisted of Iowa residents at least 18 years of age. The sampling frame was adult Iowans living in households with residential phone lines.
- Data collection began on March 9, 2000, and concluded on May 9, 2000.
- Respondents were contacted by telephone using a random digit dialing (RDD) methodology, and all data were collected via a computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) system at the Center for Social and Behavioral Research at the University of Northern Iowa.

B. Iowa SMS Public Opinion Survey Summary Findings

- Using a random sample of telephone numbers drawn by Genesys Sampling Systems, a total of 4,078 telephone numbers were dialed and yielded 1,008 complete interviews.
- The margin of error for this sample is 3.2%.

SURVEY CONTENT

The *Iowa Strategic Highway Safety Plan* contains several main “groups” of highway safety concerns (Drivers, Special Users, Highways, Emergency Response, and Management).

General goals for improving highway safety are listed within the first four of these groups. Respondents were asked to assign a “high, medium, or low” emphasis to each goal over the next five years.

Specific strategies as potential ways to achieve the goals are listed within these goals. Respondents were asked whether they would support or not support each specific strategy.

The sequence of questions within the groups, goals, and strategies were randomized within each level. Some complex or technical subjects in the plan were not included in the survey.

OVERVIEW OF THE FINDINGS

The results of this survey suggest that there is considerable agreement between the content of the *Iowa Strategic Highway Safety Plan* and public opinion concerning Iowa traffic safety.

- The majority of the respondents reported moderate or high emphasis should be placed on each of the main goals in the next five years.
- There was also considerable support for implementing the specific strategies aimed at achieving these goals. In fact, nearly all of the proposed strategies received support by the majority of those surveyed.

B. Iowa SMS Public Opinion Survey Summary Findings

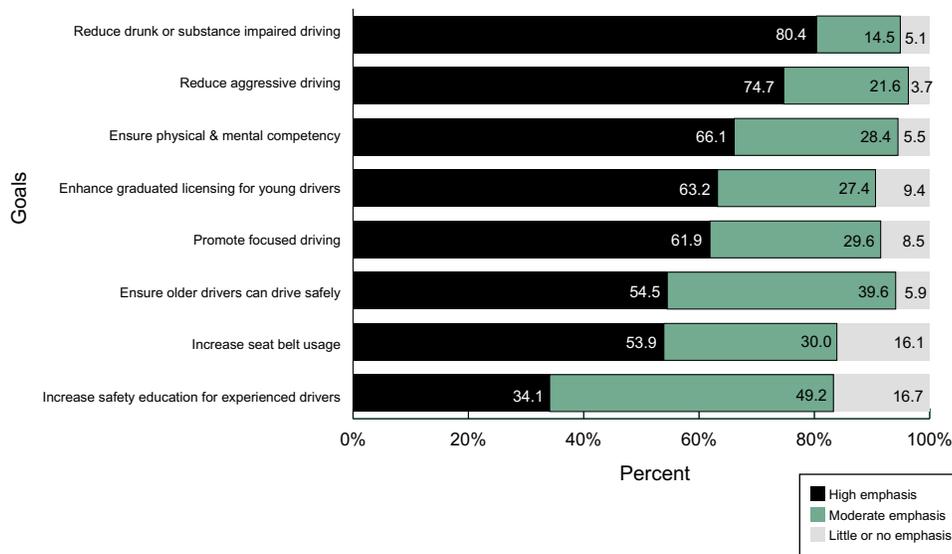
DRIVER-RELATED GOALS AND STRATEGIES

Reduce Drunk or Substance Impaired Driving

Goal

- 80% of respondents identified Reduce Drunk Or Substance Impaired Driving for high emphasis over the next five years (see figure on driver-related goals).

Iowa Public Opinion on Emphasis Driver-Related Goals Should Receive



Strategies

- 54.4% of respondents would support the strategy of Iowa lowering the blood alcohol concentration (BAC) from 0.10 to 0.08 (see figure on driver-related strategies).
- The strategy for Iowa lowering the BAC from 0.10 to 0.08 ranked first in priority among eight suggested driver-related strategies.

Reduce Aggressive Driving

Goal

- 75% of respondents identified “reduce aggressive driving” for high emphasis over the next five years (see figure on driver-related goals).

Strategies

- 92% of respondents support the strategy of practicing more vigorous enforcement to stop aggressive driving (see figure on driver-related strategies).
- 90% of respondents support the strategy of Iowa making aggressive driving illegal (see figure on driver-related strategies).
- 79% of respondents support the strategy of enacting legislation to permit giving traffic tickets based on videotape evidence for running red lights.

B. Iowa SMS Public Opinion Survey Summary Findings

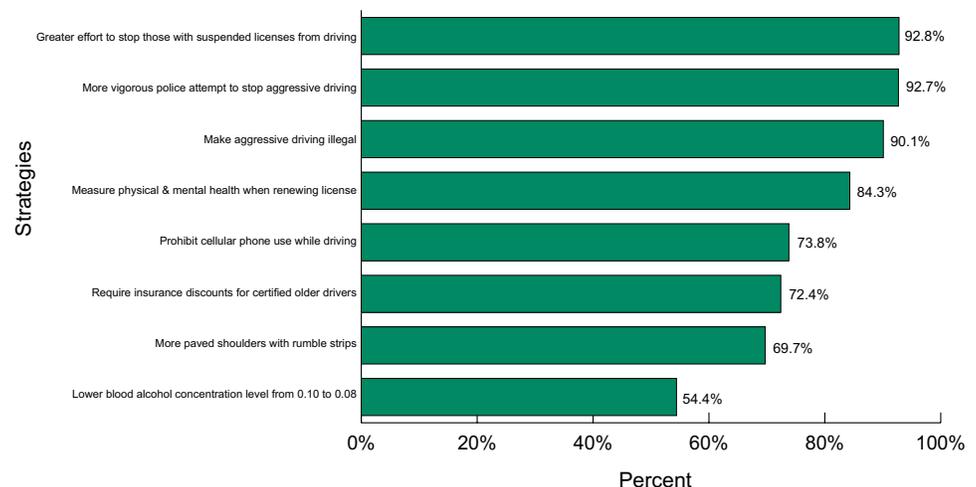
- 78% of respondents support the strategy of using videotape cameras at intersections to reduce the practice of running red lights.
- The majority of respondents reported that red light violations based on videotape evidence should be considered civil (56.1%) rather than criminal (37.8%) violations.

Ensure Driver Capacity

Goals

- 66% of respondents identified “ensure physical and mental competency for all drivers” for high emphasis over the next five years (see figure on driver-related goals).
- 55% of respondents identified “ensure older drivers are able to drive safely” for high emphasis over the next five years (see figure on driver-related goals).

Iowa Public Support for Driver-Related Strategies



Strategies

- 92% of respondents would support the strategy of greater efforts to stop suspended or revoked drivers from driving. (There are many causes for revocation/suspension related to capacity or violations.) (See figure on driver-related strategies.)
- 84% of respondents support the strategy of improving how physical and mental health is measured when renewing all driver licenses (see figure on driver-related strategies).
- 72% of respondents support the strategy of required insurance discounts for older drivers who complete a certified driver education refresher course (see figure on driver-related strategies).

Enhance Graduated Licensing for Young Drivers

Goal

- 63% of respondents identified “enhance graduated licensing for young drivers” for high emphasis over the next five years (see figure on driver-related goals).

B. Iowa SMS Public Opinion Survey Summary Findings

Promote Focused Driving

Goal

- 61% of respondents identified “promote focused driving” (to prevent distracted or drowsy driving) for high emphasis over the next five years (see figure on driver-related goals).

Strategies

- 74% of respondents support the strategy of prohibiting cell phone use while driving (see figure on driver-related strategies).
- 70% of respondents support the strategy of adding more paved shoulders with rumble strips (see figure on driver-related strategies).

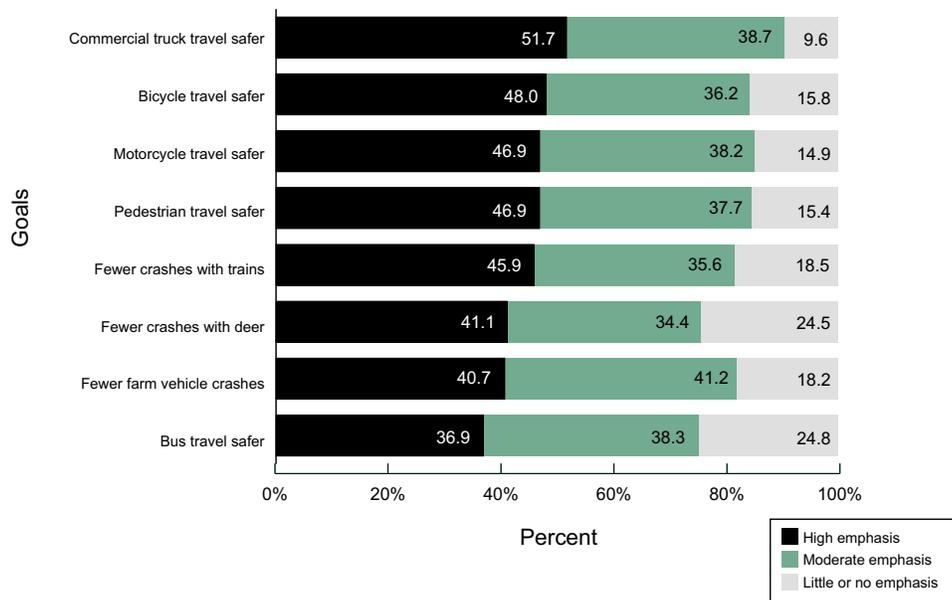
Increase Seat Belt Use

Goal

- 54% of respondents identified “increase seat belt use” for high emphasis over the next five years (see figure on driver-related goals).

SPECIAL USER GOALS AND STRATEGIES

Iowa Public Opinion on Emphasis Special User Goals Should Receive



Make Commercial Truck Travel Safer

Goal

- 52% of respondents identified “make commercial truck travel safer” for high emphasis over the next five years (see figure on special user goals).

Strategy

- 88% of respondents support “Increase truck and driver inspections.”

B. Iowa SMS Public Opinion Survey Summary Findings

Goals

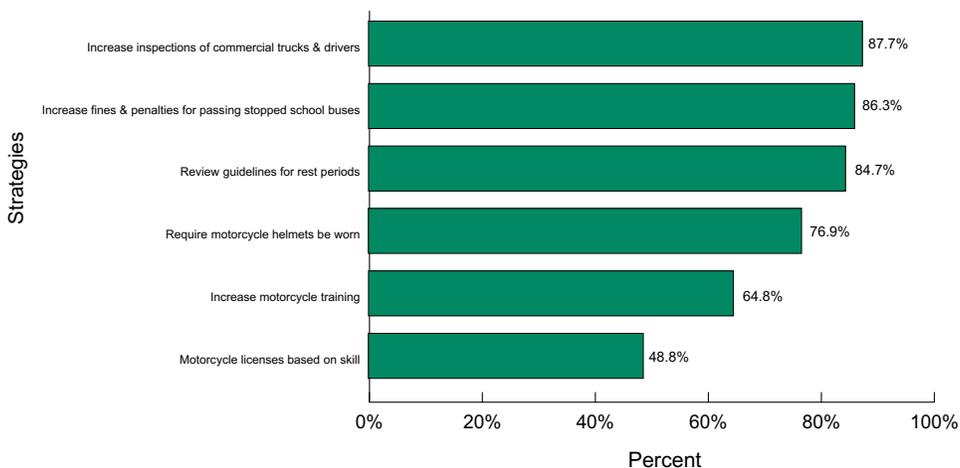
- These “special user” safety improvement goal areas all ranked below 50% in high emphasis responses (see figure on special user goals): bicycle (48%), motorcycle (47%), pedestrian (47%), train-vehicle crashes (46%), farm vehicle (41%), and bus (37%).

Strategies

(See figure on special user strategies.)

- 85% of respondents support “review guidelines for driver rest periods.”
- 77% of respondents support “require motorcycle helmet use.”
- 65% of respondents support “increase motorcycle training.”
- 49% of respondents support “motorcycle licenses based on skill.”

Iowa Public Support for Special User Strategies



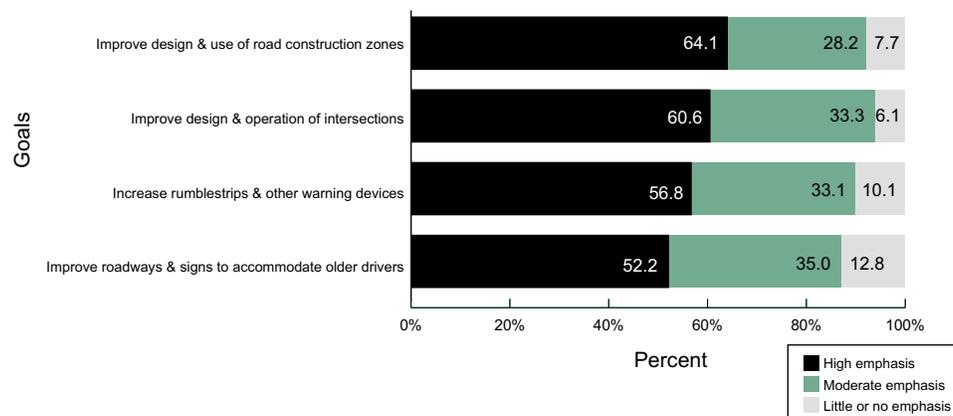
HIGHWAY DESIGN GOALS AND STRATEGIES

Goals

Respondents preference for high emphasis over the next five years (see figure on highway design goals):

- 64% improve design and use of construction zones.
- 61% improve design and operation of intersections.
- 57% increase rumble strip and warning devices.
- 52% improve roadways and signs for older drivers.

Iowa Public Opinion on Emphasis Highway Design Goals Should Receive

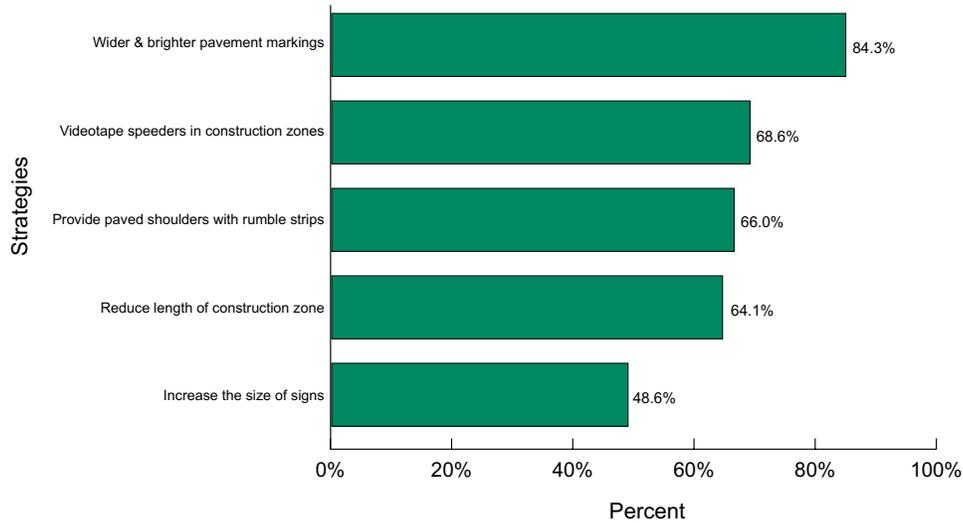


B. Iowa SMS Public Opinion Survey Summary Findings

Strategies

(See figure on highway design strategies.)

Iowa Public Support for Highway Design Strategies



- 84% of respondents support “provide wider pavement markings.”

- 69% of respondents support “use video cameras to monitor motorist speeds in construction zones.”

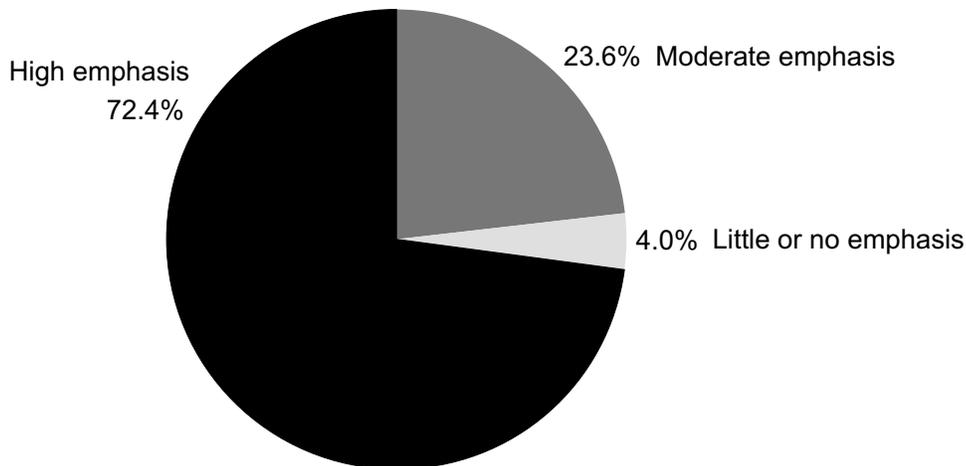
- 66% of respondents support “provide paved shoulders.”

- 64% of respondents support “design shorter construction zones.”

EMERGENCY RESPONSE GOAL

Over 95% of those surveyed reported that improving emergency rescue and medical services to crash victims should receive high or moderate emphasis in the next five years (see figure on emergency response goal).

Iowa Public Opinion on Emphasis Emergency Response Goal Should Receive



B. Iowa SMS Public Opinion Survey Summary Findings

SAMPLE DEMOGRAPHICS

- The margin of error for this sample is 3.2%.
- Of the 1,008 adults interviewed, 94.9% reported having valid Iowa driver licenses.
- Of those with a valid or suspended driver's license, the vast majority (94.2%) had a regular operator's license. One in ten (10.2%) had a motorcycle or motorcycle instruction permit. No other types of licenses or permits were reported by at least 10% of the respondents.
- Nearly two-thirds (65.9%) of those with any driver's license reported that they had no restrictions. The most common restriction was for vision (32.3%), which required respondent to wear glasses or contact lenses while driving.
- Cars (82.4%), pickups or light vans (50.6%), and sports utility vehicles (SUVs, 13.8%) were the most frequently reported types of vehicles driven by the respondent or members of the respondent's household.
- The median number of miles respondents reported driving per year was 13,000.
- Of the 71.4% of respondents who reported working for wages/salary, the median number of miles traveled round-trip commuting to work or daily traveling was 15.
- Regular use of a public bus was reported by 2.7% of respondents.
- In 12.0% of the households, at least one child aged 5 to 17 rode a school bus to school.

Note: The response rate was calculated using the RR4 formula, and the cooperation rate was calculated using the COOP3 formula. Both formulas are from the American Association for Public Opinion Research (1998). Standard definitions: final dispositions of case codes and outcome rates for RDD telephone surveys and in-person household surveys (AAPOR, Ann Arbor, Michigan).

CONCLUSION

The findings highlighted in this summary indicate that adult Iowans believe that the goals in the *Iowa Strategic Highway Safety Plan* should receive considerable emphasis in Iowa's efforts to improve traffic safety. Although there are numerous ways in which these goals might be accomplished, most of the strategies in the plan draft that were included in this survey were supported by a majority of respondents.

B. Iowa SMS Public Opinion Survey Summary Findings

RESOURCES

Contact the Iowa Safety Management System at safety.engineering@dot.state.ia.us for additional information concerning the *Iowa Strategic Highway Safety Plan* or the content of the survey.

Contact the Center for Social and Behavioral Research at research@csbr.csbs.uni.edu for additional information concerning the survey methodology or data analysis.