

White Paper on Traffic Safety Culture

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Under Subcontract to:

Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc.

Executive Summary prepared for the

Federal Highway Administration

Office of Safety

July 7, 2010

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Traffic safety culture appears to be an intuitive and powerful concept with which to explain observed differences in international, regional, and demographic crash risk, as well as the propensity to commit high risk behaviors. If it is possible to define and apply this concept within a relevant social psychological theory of behavioral choice, it may be possible to develop a new paradigm for traffic safety interventions. Indeed, there are numerous examples of the effectiveness of traffic safety interventions predicated on the effect of culture on behavioral choice.

A culture-based approach is complementary to, but fundamentally different in form and philosophy from traditional traffic safety interventions including engineering, enforcement, and education. By treating the origin of risk behaviors (pathogens), cultural-based interventions are proactive and transformational in their treatment approach.

This paper describes the potential role of cultural transformations in our traffic safety system as well as identifying potential hazards and recommended strategies for implementing this traffic safety paradigm.

This paper estimates an annual savings of \$28 billion in crash reductions and a \$6 billion annual cost in implementation. The resulting cost to benefit ratio of greater than 4:1 is encouraging.