

TRANSPORTATION SAFETY CAREER PATHWAY SPOTLIGHT

Career Pathway:

Chris Strong is the Transportation Division Manager for the city of Gresham, Oregon. Chris is a civil engineer with bachelor's and master's degrees from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and the University of Texas at Austin, respectively. He has been in the transportation field for over 20 years spanning planning, engineering, research, and management. His previous positions include working for a metropolitan planning organization, a consulting firm, the Western Transportation Institute (WTI), and another municipal government. He is a registered professional engineer in both Oregon and Wisconsin.



Chris Strong

Becoming Involved In Safety:

Chris first became involved in safety during his time at WTI, where he led or supported various research projects related to how highway safety overlapped with severe weather and the role that technology solutions could play in reducing crash rates. He served as program manager for operations and safety, where they grappled with not only local safety issues, but with the higher fatality rates that exist systematically in rural environments. Chris came to recognize that improving roadway design can help with safety outcomes, but that alone will not be sufficient to really move the needle on safety. After his tenure at WTI, Chris oversaw traffic engineering for two small/medium cities, where each fatal or severe crash makes an impact on the community.

Organization:
City of Gresham, OR

Job Title:
Transportation Division Manager

Training/Education:
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, University of Texas at Austin

Degree/Certification:

- B.S. in Civil Engineering
- M.S. in Civil Engineering

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How do professional activities make a positive impact on society?

"In my municipal government experience, I have found it very helpful to collaborate with local law enforcement, especially in terms of two-way communication about issues that we are seeing with roadway safety. I benefit in learning from their field observations as well as in understanding the constraints and challenges of their jobs. I have also found it important to leverage the crash data we have, in order to better understand the crashes that are happening. Finally, I have found it helpful to look at the stories behind the individual crashes from more of a human interest level. I owe it to the victims of these crashes to understand what contributed to these crashes, and what if anything could be done to avoid replicating them."

Chris believes that road safety is a profoundly personal issue for those who have suffered loss. He says that starting from a position of empathy helps all those involved in the safety community to identify ways we can work better together and embrace the outside-the-box thinking needed for improving rural road safety.



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