Traffic Safety in the U.S.: Re-examining Major Opportunities

This report examines five major road-safety risk factors: exceeding posted speed limits, not using safety belts, driving while intoxicated, nighttime driving, and young drivers. The importance of each of these factors is documented, known effective countermeasures (both policy and technology based) are discussed, and impediments to the implementation of these countermeasures in the U.S. are examined.

Based on current understanding of the five major risk factors, and of the available countermeasures, there appear to be a variety of opportunities to make substantial gains in road safety using existing knowledge. The limited implementation of a variety of known countermeasures therefore appears to be inconsistent with high-level, strategic goals to improve road safety.

Consequently, a recommendation is made to comprehensively re-examine the balance between the countermeasures discussed in this report and economic, mobility, and privacy concerns. Such a re-examination is likely to result in broad support for these countermeasures, with a consequent major improvement in road safety.