TEXAS
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AI in Government Decision-Making

October 1, 2025 | 11:00 am – 11:55 am CT

Teams Link: TIA Call Link
Phone: +1 512-831-7901
Phone Conference ID: 100 695 711#

Summary
The session featured **Dr. Suresh Venkatasubramanian (Brown University)** presenting on the National Academies report *Strategies for Integrating AI into State and Local Government Decision Making*.

11:00 AM CT | Welcome and Announcements

Speaker: Mikhaela Sample, Center for Transportation Research

Mikhaela Sample introduced the session, noting the focus on AI use in transportation and alignment with TxDOT's AI Strategic Plan.

11:10 AM CT | Integrating AI into State and Local Government Decisions

Speaker: Suresh Venkatasubramanian
Co-author: *Strategies for Integrating AI into State and Local Government Decision Making: Rapid Expert Consultation*.

Key Themes:

- **Purpose over tools:** Agencies should define the problem first, rather than adopting vendor-driven AI solutions.
- **Community engagement:** Both professional communities (e.g., transportation practitioners) and the public should be consulted to ensure meaningful AI applications.
- **Governance & evaluation:** Iterative deployment, feedback loops, and human-in-the-loop oversight are critical, especially for high-stakes or socio-technical decisions.
- **Data quality:** Reliable, timely data is foundational; without it, AI cannot provide meaningful results.
- **Risk frameworks:** The NIST Risk Management Framework and similar tools help distinguish when AI should be fully automated versus used as decision support.

- **Vendor evaluation:** Agencies should ask vendors clear questions about data use, validation, customization, and willingness to run pilots before committing.
- **Capacity building:** Training and culture-building within agencies are essential so staff can assess and govern AI tools effectively.

11:20 AM CT | Q&A on Dr. Venkatasubramanian's Presentation

Q&A Highlights:

- Uday Kari raised the Turing Test and emphasized data challenges in traffic operations.
- Anna McAuley asked about thresholds for human-in-the-loop vs. automation.
- Matt Miller asked about applying systems engineering frameworks.
- Amanda raised concerns about automation bias and critical thinking when using AI outputs.
- Darran Anderson (TxDOT CIO) emphasized TxDOT's strategy of validation, cautious adoption, and human oversight.
- Patrick Mandapaka asked about AI use in permitting and planning; Suresh pointed to the GovAI Coalition.
- Craig Casper described treating AI "like an intern" — useful but needing supervision.
- Mikhaela asked about community engagement best practices, and Suresh stressed focusing on people's actual needs rather than tech-first solutions.
- Closing discussion reinforced that AI is not "just another digitization step," but a different class of technology affecting judgment and governance.

11:45 AM CT | Updates from Center for Transportation Research

- Next deep dive: November 5, on transportation in rural areas.
- Next in-person TIA meeting: October 29 at TxDOT headquarters, with an emergency response panel and project showcases.
- Suresh offered to connect the group with an NSF AI Institute on disaster management.

11:55 AM CT | Adjourn