



## **MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** TPB Technical Committee  
**FROM:** Janie Nham, TPB Transportation Planner  
**SUBJECT:** Performance-Based Planning and Programming (PBPP) Regional Highway Safety Targets  
**DATE:** October 28, 2022

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This memorandum describes the National Capital Region's progress in implementing federal highway safety performance evaluation and target-setting requirements established by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). State departments of transportation (DOTs) and metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) are federally required to set highway safety performance targets and measure their progress towards those targets annually for their respective planning areas.

At its November 16 and December 21, 2022 meetings, the TPB will be asked to consider and approve 2019-2023 targets for highway safety in accordance with federal PBPP requirements.

## **BACKGROUND**

The Safety Performance Management Measures (Safety PM) Final Rule, issued by the FHWA on March 15, 2016, established target-setting requirements for State DOTs and MPOs. Safety PM complements a collection of rules that establish and refine the program structure and requirements of the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP), a Federal-aid program that requires States to improve highway safety on public roads using a data-driven, strategic approach focused on performance. Specifically, the Safety PM rule supports implementation of HSIP by requiring DOTs and MPOs to adopt safety performance targets annually for specific safety performance measures. It also establishes a process for measuring and reporting progress towards those targets.

By requiring safety targets and ongoing evaluation of safety performance, the compendium of regulations aims to promote transparency and accountability, enables the tracking and understanding of progress on roadway safety, and facilitates informed transportation planning and investment decisions.

## **RULE PROVISIONS**

The Safety PM rule requires DOTs and MPOs to set safety performance targets in five performance categories and to measure progress towards those targets on a yearly basis. The targets are reported as five-year rolling averages. DOTs must establish and report targets each year by August 31 through their annual HSIP report, after which MPOs must set and report targets for the metropolitan planning area within 180 days. While the targets are set by State and regional agencies, they apply to all public roads within their respective areas regardless of ownership or functional classification.

Performance Measure	Description	Data Source
Number of Fatalities (5-year rolling average)	Total number of fatalities during a calendar year	FARS <sup>1</sup>
Rate of Fatalities per 100 million Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) (5-year rolling average)	Ratio of total fatalities to VMT	FARS and HPMS <sup>2</sup> (or MPO estimate)
Number of Serious Injuries (5-year rolling average)	Total number of serious injuries during a calendar year	State reported serious injury data
Rate of Serious Injuries per 100 million VMT (5-year rolling average)	Ratio of total serious injuries to VMT	State reported serious injury data and HPMS
Number of Non-motorized Fatalities and Serious Injuries (5-year rolling average)	Total number of fatalities and serious injuries during a calendar year	FARS and State reported serious injury data

<sup>1</sup>FARS: Fatality Analysis Reporting System

<sup>2</sup>HPMS: Highway Performance Monitoring System

To avoid consequences outlined in the rule, States must either meet the target or make “significant progress” toward meeting the target for four of the five performance measures. The FHWA determines that the significant progress threshold has been met if the performance measure outcome is better than the “baseline,” which is defined as the 5-year rolling average for that performance measure for the year prior to the establishment of the target. State DOTs that have not met or made significant progress toward meeting their safety performance targets lose some flexibility in how they can spend their HSIP funds and are required to submit an annual implementation plan that describes actions the DOT will take to meet their targets.

MPO targets are not evaluated by the FHWA, and there are no consequences for MPOs if they fail to meet their targets. The FHWA, however, will review how MPOs incorporate and discuss safety performance measures and targets in their long-range transportation plans and transportation improvement plans (TIPs) during quadrennial MPO certification reviews (the next such MPO certification process for TPB is anticipated to occur in 2023).

## **CALCULATION OF HIGHWAY SAFETY TARGETS FOR THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION**

The TPB’s approach for calculating regional highway safety targets for the National Capital Region (NCR) leverages the approaches used by its Maryland, District of Columbia, and Virginia DOT partners. To account for and incorporate the different target setting approaches used by each State to develop targets for the entire NCR, TPB staff apply the following methodology to develop the proposed draft targets:

- identify a “sub-target” for the Maryland portion of the NCR by applying MDOT’s target setting approach to the safety data for the Maryland portion of the NCR;
- identify a “sub-target” for the Virginia portion of the NCR by applying VDOT’s suggested MPO target setting methodology to the safety data for the Virginia portion of the NCR;

- identify a “sub-target” for the District of Columbia portion of the NCR by directly incorporating DDOT’s targets;
- combine the three sub-targets mathematically into a set of initial regional targets;
- compare each performance measure’s sub target with the corresponding target set last year; and
- select the lower (more aggressive) of the two targets as this year’s target.

The NCR targets for the number of fatalities, number of serious injuries, and number of non-motorist fatalities and serious injuries are calculated using this approach.

Determination of rate targets (fatality rate and serious injury rate) involve mathematically combining the effects of the Suburban Maryland, Northern Virginia, and District of Columbia targets according to their respective proportions of total regional VMT.

### **2019-2023 HIGHWAY SAFETY TARGETS FOR THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION**

State DOT partners are currently working to provide TPB Staff with the relevant safety target and performance data for the calculation of this round of regional highway safety targets. TPB staff hopes that State data will become available in time for draft targets to be presented at the November 4 TPB Technical Committee meeting. The draft 2022 highway safety targets will be briefed to the TPB at their November meeting. Comments will be taken through the end of November, after which the targets will be finalized for adoption at the TPB’s December meeting.

Following adoption, the Visualize 2045 long-range metropolitan transportation plan System Performance Report (Appendix D) will be updated with the 2019-2023 targets as well as available information on recent performance in relation to targets.