

TRANSPORTATION SAFETY PLANNING

Keeping transportation system users safe from death and injury is a top goal of the TPB. The Washington metropolitan area is a diverse and rapidly growing region, a major tourist destination, and a gateway for immigrants from all over the world. Growth has meant more people from more places driving, riding, and walking more miles in the Washington region than ever before. Tourists and newcomers may be unfamiliar with local traffic rules and dangers. Street design, motorist behavior, and pedestrian and bicyclist behavior must allow all to remain safe from harm.

Need for a Transportation Safety Element

Over 280 people die in traffic every year in the Washington region, and 36,000 are injured. Improving safety for all modes is critical to improving quality of life and improving access for all the citizens of the region. Transportation Safety is a critical component of the regional transportation plan, and it informs multiple elements of the plan. Crash reduction is integral to the **Congestion Management Process**, planning for **Access for All, Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning, regional Bus Planning, Freight Planning**, the **Transportation Improvement Program**, and the **Transportation-Land Use Connections program**.

This section of the CLRP is the required Transportation Safety Element of the Regional Long-Range Plan. Under the most recent federal transportation bill, SAFETEA-LU, the long-range transportation plan for the region must include a safety element. The Federal regulations issued on February 14, 2007 specify that the safety element must incorporate or summarize the priorities, goals, countermeasures, or projects for the Metropolitan Planning Area which are contained in the State Strategic Highway Safety Plan. All regional plans developed after July 1, 2007 must be SAFETEA-LU-compliant.

The TPB Vision

The **TPB Vision** calls for priority to the safety of all modes and facilities. Specifically, the Vision calls upon TPB members to provide safer transportation facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists, and persons with special needs, better enforcement of traffic laws and motor carrier safety regulations, achieve national targets for seatbelt use, and use appropriate features in facility design. Examples of safety measures encouraged in the *Vision* include red-light cameras, skid-resistant pavements, elimination of roadside hazards, and better intersection controls.

Region Forward 2050

In January 2010 the Council of Governments adopted **Region Forward 2050**, a vision for the National Capital region in 2050. The goals of Region Forward are broader than those of the TPB Vision, encompassing areas such as public safety, land use, economic development, and the environment. Region Forward sets specific targets and indicators to show progress towards its broader goals. For example, it calls for reduced pedestrian and bicyclist deaths and injuries.

Complete Streets

The “Complete Streets” concept encourages creating or adapting transportation facilities that safely and appropriately accommodate motorized and non-motorized users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, freight vehicles, emergency vehicles, and transit riders of all ages and abilities.

In May 2012 the Transportation Planning Board adopted a [Complete Streets policy](#) for the National Capital Region. The Transportation Planning Board endorsed the “Complete Streets” concept, and encouraged the TPB member jurisdictions and agencies that do not already have a Complete Streets policy in place, or who are revising an existing policy, to adopt a Complete Streets policy that includes common elements that the TPB

believes represent current best practices. The regional Complete Streets policy re-affirms the TPB's commitment to safety for all transportation modes, including walking, bicycling, and public transportation.

The Transportation Improvement Program

The **Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)** provides detailed information showing which projects in the long-range plan will be completed over the next six-year period. In the TIP TPB members state how programs and projects submitted for inclusion in the TIP serve the goal of Transportation Safety, as well as identify those projects whose *primary* purpose is to enhance safety. These requirements will enable the region to track how much funding is being programmed for safety, as well as giving a better picture of the types of safety enhancements that are being programmed.

The TPB Work Program

In addition to encouraging and tracking safety projects and programs by its members, the TPB also promotes safety through its own programs. Under its Transportation Safety Planning program, the TPB compiles and analyzes regional safety data, coordinates the metropolitan transportation planning aspects of state, regional, and local safety efforts, coordinates with other TPB committee on the integration of safety considerations, and develops and maintains the safety element of the region's long-range plan. Safety also plays a significant role in TPB program areas such as **Congestion Management Process, Management and Operations, Traffic Signals, Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning, regional Bus Planning, Freight Planning, Access for All**, and the **Transportation-Land Use Connections program**. The Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee frequently sponsors workshops which focus on safety engineering and education improvements.

Transportation Safety Subcommittee

The **Transportation Safety Subcommittee** of the TPB Technical Committee includes representatives from a wide range of Safety stakeholders, including the State Departments of Transportation Planning, TPB member jurisdiction planning staff, law enforcement, and public health representatives. The core activity of the Transportation Safety Subcommittee will be to advise staff on the creation and maintenance of the federally-required Safety element of the long-range transportation plan for the region. This will involve coordination between TPB staff, the committee, and those staff and consultants working on the state Strategic Highway Safety Plans.

The subcommittee will also facilitate exchange of information among Safety stakeholders, and will be a means of keeping each other informed about ongoing activities and best practices. Staff will compile regional safety data and identify regional problems, and under the guidance of the new subcommittee will coordinate and cross-inform on this issue with other TPB technical activities.

The subcommittee will advise the TPB and TPB Technical Committee on Safety, and may provide regional planning recommendations from the safety perspective.

Street Smart Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Program

Another major safety-related program sponsored by the Transportation Planning Board is the **Street Smart Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety campaign**, which consists of waves of advertising, media events, and concurrent pedestrian-related traffic enforcement. The program is intended to save lives by raising awareness of pedestrian and bicyclist safety, and changing motorist and pedestrian behavior.

Outlook

The TPB will continue to promote safety through its work program and through the CLRP. Major activities will include tracking safety funding through the TIP process, sharing best practices through various committees, regional traffic safety data compilation and sharing, continued participation in the **State Highway Safety planning process**, and coordination of the metropolitan planning aspects of state, regional, and local safety efforts, especially education and enforcement. The Safety Subcommittee will advise staff on the maintenance of the Safety Element of the CLRP, exchange information on ongoing activities and best practices, track progress on **regional traffic safety emphasis areas** and advise the TPB and TPB Technical Committee on Safety.