



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** TPB Technical Committee

**FROM:** Eric Randall, TPB Transportation Engineer  
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**SUBJECT:** Performance-Based Planning and Programming (PBPP) Regional Highway and Transit Safety Targets – Additional information

**DATE:** November 27, 2024

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At the November 20 TPB meeting, TPB staff briefed committee members on the National Capital Region's progress in meeting its 2019-2023 highway safety targets and shared recommendations for highway safety targets for the 2021-2025 period. Staff also discussed updated federal transit safety rules, actual transit safety performance in 2023, and the ongoing process of developing the 2024 regional transit safety targets. This memorandum addresses adjustments in highway safety data methodology and the work being done at TPB and across the region with regards to improving transportation safety. The memorandum also notes the changes to the transit safety performance target setting process and more information on accounting for fatalities involving the region's transit systems.

### CHANGES TO FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR TRANSIT SAFETY PERFORMANCE TARGETS

Since the publication of the federal Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) rule in 2018, federal regulations have required applicable transit agencies to set targets for seven performance measures to track and improve safety and security across transit operations. On April 9, 2024, an updated PTASP rule was published requiring applicable transit agencies to set targets for an additional seven performance measures, for a total of 14. The seven new measures amplify on the original seven measures: two focus on tracking the rates of existing performance measures as they apply to transit workers (fatalities and injuries) and two relate to assaults of transit workers, while the other three expand on collision rates in greater detail, specifically the total rate of collisions and the individual rates of vehicular and pedestrian-related collisions. These additions reflect an acknowledgment by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the industry of the safety risks facing transit workers on the job and the need to better understand the nature of collision incidents in order to prevent them.

The updated PTASP rule became effective May 13, 2024. Any agency safety plans and respective performance targets set after that date are required to account for the seven new measures. As a result, the 2024 TPB regional transit safety targets will also reflect targets for all fourteen performance measures. Due to the relatively recent enactment of the new PTASP rule, many transit agencies across the region have required more time to develop their complete set of annual safety targets. This subsequently has led to a delayed completion of TPB's draft regional transit safety targets. TPB staff continue to collaborate with member jurisdictions to finish data collection and present targets for all fourteen performance measures to the board in December.

## **ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND ON TRANSIT FATALITY COUNTS**

At the TPB's November 20 meeting, more information was sought by the board about the nature of safety and security incidents in 2023, specifically fatalities and those due to homicides. The FTA's 2024 NTD Safety and Security (S&S) Reporting Policy Manual outlines what and how fatalities should be reported:

“Agencies must always report events that result in fatalities.

Fatalities that occur because of illnesses, drug overdoses, or other natural causes (including individuals who are found deceased) are not reportable ... Deaths of undetermined cause in a rail right-of-way that may be the result of collision or electrocution are reportable.

An agency must report a fatality due to a reportable S&S event if it is confirmed to have occurred within 30 days of the event. If an agency receives confirmation that a death occurred within 30 days of an event to a person initially reported as an injury, then you may have to update the submitted major event report...” (page 25).

Due to how a fatality may be interpreted according to federal guidance, the respective date of the event, and other factors, a transit fatality reported by the media may or may not have occurred on transit property or right-of-way and may or may not be counted in an agency's annual system performance total. In addition, at TPB our regional transit safety targets for fatalities do not include suicides in total counts.

## **ADDITIONAL ROADWAY DATA ANALYSIS AND TPB SAFETY EFFORTS**

Since March 2024, TPB staff has been working with a consultant to complete a regional safety study to understand the nature and location of fatal and serious injury crashes occurring between 2018 and 2023, as an update to the Regional Safety Study completed in 2020. Following a data collection effort in Spring 2024, the consultant began work on an analysis of crash frequency, types, and contributing/involved factors. Work on this analysis is ongoing.

Over the next several months, the following additional study elements will be conducted/finalized:

- an examination of the distribution of crashes inside and outside of regional Equity Emphasis Areas (EEAs)
- a review of qualitative information collected from jurisdictional staff via a questionnaire to understand local crash trends and involved factors
- completion of a written report documenting findings

At this time, staff anticipates that the study will be completed in Spring 2025. The Technical Committee and TPB will be briefed on the findings as soon as they become available.

The study would supplement several other roadway safety activities recently undertaken by the TPB, in coordination with state and local partners. These activities include:

- **Street Smart Safety Campaign**, a COG program, which has been running for 20 years and is focused on reducing the number of pedestrian and bicyclist injuries and deaths in the region. See <https://www.beststreetsmart.net/>.
- **Regional Roadway Safety Program (RRSP)**, which encourages jurisdictions to implement roadway safety improvements by providing technical assistance for local, small-scale planning or preliminary engineering projects focused on roadway safety. See <https://www.mwcog.org/transportation/planning-areas/management-operations-and-safety/roadway-safety/regional-safety-program/>.
- **TPB Transportation Safety Subcommittee**, which provides local transportation practitioners to exchange best practices, learn about emerging trends and developments in roadway safety, and coordinate on regional roadway safety matters. The subcommittee has been operating since 2012.

## LOCAL SAFETY EFFORTS

The TPB’s safety efforts are designed to complement those of state and local jurisdictions in the region, many of whom have adopted Vision Zero or similar “zero deaths” goals and policies and continue to implement strategies. The following is a partial summary of major safety initiatives by TPB member jurisdictions:

### District of Columbia

- District of Columbia – operates under [Vision Zero DC](#)

### Maryland

- City of Bowie – participates in Prince George’s County’s Vision Zero plan
- Charles County – adopted Roadway Safety Plan in 2023. The Town of La Plata was awarded a U.S. Department of Transportation Safe Streets for All (SS4A) grant in 2024 to develop a Safe Streets plan
- City of College Park – awarded SS4A grant in 2024 to develop Safety Action Plan
- Frederick County – operates under [Towards Zero Deaths Frederick County](#)
- City of Frederick – adopted Vision Zero resolution in 2021; awarded SS4A grant in 2023 to develop Safety Action Plan
- City of Gaithersburg – awarded RRSP technical assistance grant in 2023 to develop Local Road Safety Plan, and SS4A grant in 2023 to develop Safety Action Plan
- City of Greenbelt - awarded SS4A grant in 2024 to develop Safety Action Plan
- City of Laurel - awarded SS4A grant in 2024 to develop Safety Action Plan
- Montgomery County – operates under [Vision Zero Montgomery County, MD](#). Awarded a SS4A grant in 2024 to update its Safety Action Plan.
- Prince George’s County – operates under [Vision Zero Prince George’s](#). The City of New Carrollton was awarded a SS4A grant in 2024 to develop a Safety Action Plan
- City of Rockville – operates under its [Vision Zero Action Plan](#)
- City of Takoma Park - awarded SS4A grant in 2024 to develop Safety Action Plan

## Virginia

- City of Alexandria – operates under [Vision Zero Alexandria](#)
- Arlington County – operates under [Vision Zero Arlington County](#)
- Fairfax County – operates under [Safe Streets for All](#) program. The Town of Herndon was awarded a SS4A grant in 2024 to develop a Safety Action Plan
- City of Manassas Park – awarded a SS4A in 2023 to develop a Safety Action Plan (concurrently with Prince William County)
- Loudoun County – awarded a SS4A grant in 2023 to develop a Safety Action Plan
- Prince William County – awarded a SS4A grant in 2023 to develop a Safety Action Plan and in 2024 to develop a vulnerable road users plan

U.S. Department of Transportation SS4A grant awards for all years can be accessed via: <https://www.transportation.gov/grants/ss4a/cumulative-awards>

## REGIONAL HIGHWAY SAFETY METHODOLOGY ADJUSTMENTS

This year, the methodology used by staff and member agencies to tally regional fatalities and serious injuries had two adjustments.

- **Maryland crash data** – Maryland agencies have transitioned from the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) to the Maryland State Police Data Warehouse as the official source for crash data. One difference in how the two sources count fatalities is that the Maryland State Police Data Warehouse includes “non-traffic” fatalities, which can include fatalities that are caused by a medical event or that occur on non-public roads, like a parking lot or private driveway. As a result, the numbers may be higher than those which would have been provided by MDOT.
- **Urbanized Area of Fauquier County** - Data for the urbanized area of Fauquier County, Virginia is no longer included, after the county changed its TPB membership status earlier this year based on an US Census update to urban area boundaries. Since 2013, the area has had on average one fatality and 17 serious injuries each year.

TPB highway safety targets are based on projections provided by the District Department of Transportation (DDOT), MDOT, and Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) for their respective portions in the region. While each agency uses its own model, their projections are based on historical performance data. Notably, MDOT applies a two percent decrease to targets that are experiencing increasing trends, which include the number of fatalities and the fatality rate. In addition, staff use a modified version of VDOT’s process by setting targets using five-year rolling averages and a linear trendline.

TPB has periodically invited state DOT personnel to provide briefings on statewide safety activities, including target setting and safety performance. The most recent event was held in December 2022. A summary of that roundtable can be accessed via: <https://www.mwcog.org/newsroom/2022/12/21/tpb-safety-roundtable-highlights/>