



**Visualize 2050
Planning and
Programming Process**

**Transportation Safety
Planning**

Part 15 of 27



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OVERVIEW OF TRANSPORTATION SAFETY PLANNING

Roadway safety is an essential element of livability in the region. Beyond the tragic loss of life, safety risks undermine the region’s efforts to create walkable, bikeable communities that provide transportation choices, enhance accessibility, and reduce emissions.

The National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) has long acknowledged roadway safety as an essential element of the region’s livability and has planned for transportation safety needs through the transportation planning process. In addition to making safety a core part of its regional vision, the TPB’s safety program draws on local expertise through its committees, sets highway safety performance targets and monitors progress, and supports a range of incentives that promote safety across member jurisdictions and communities.

TPB’S ROLE AND KEY STAFF

The TPB safety planning program helps to advance roadway safety in the region by highlighting it as a policy priority and providing resources to support the safety efforts of member jurisdictions. The TPB achieves this by providing policy priorities and guidance, serving as a forum for collaboration and information exchange; providing technical assistance to support implementation of local safety measures; and generating technical resources for decision-making. The TPB includes a regional transportation planning task in its Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) with activities that support roadway safety in the transportation planning process.

The TPB’s transportation safety program consists of various elements including a Transportation Safety Subcommittee, the Regional Roadway Safety Program, regional safety studies and data analysis, and special safety events and work sessions. The TPB also responds to safety-related federal requirements for MPOs. Table 15.1 summarizes the key TPB staff who support the TPB’s transportation safety activities. The program is supported by consultant assistance as needed.

TABLE 15.1: KEY STAFF

TPB Staff	Title	Role
Kanti Srikanth	Executive Director	Staff Director for the Transportation Planning Board (TPB)
Tom Harrington	Program Director	Contributor
Janie Nham	Planning Manager	Contributor

Role of TPB Subcommittees

Since 2012, the TPB’s Transportation Safety Subcommittee has served as a forum for local transportation practitioners to exchange best practices, learn about emerging trends and developments in roadway safety, and coordinate on regional roadway safety matters. Subcommittee participants typically include transportation staff from member jurisdictions and

agencies, COG/TPB transportation planning staff, and transportation-related consulting firms. The subcommittee meets quarterly, and meetings feature presentations on member safety projects and studies; academic research from transportation, public health, and other related fields; as well as TPB presentations on relevant planning activities or programs.

The Subcommittee also advises on safety-related action items before they advance to the TPB Technical Committee and Transportation Planning Board for review and adoption.

ROLE OF KEY PLANNING AGENCIES

The TPB's member jurisdictions and agencies play a vital role in the safety program because they implement the safety policies adopted by the board. As a result, the TPB regularly engages with local jurisdictions and state departments of transportation, typically through the Transportation Safety Subcommittee, to gather best practices that could be shared across the region. Collaboration with state departments has also been essential to fulfill federal reporting requirements, such as the setting of annual highway safety targets for performance-based planning and programming.

In addition, safety-focused agencies at the federal level such as the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) provide tools, data, and other technical resources to support safety efforts by TPB staff, state agencies, and jurisdictions. Staff from NHTSA and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) have also briefed the Transportation Safety Subcommittee and TPB members on ongoing federal safety initiatives, such as the USDOT's National Roadway Safety Strategy.

TPB member agencies provided technical inputs for Visualize 2050 including projects and programs aimed at improving safety. During the submission process, agencies had the opportunity to indicate which projects supported the TPB's safety goal.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

TPB's safety planning program incorporates public input received through regularly occurring TPB meetings. The TPB's Community Advisory Committee also receives updates on safety activities and is provided with the opportunity to share feedback during briefings. In addition to these venues, the TPB occasionally holds special forums on safety topics, like the Regional Roadway Safety Summit, which are open to the public.

FEDERALLY REQUIRED SAFETY TARGETS

The TPB has adopted annual highway safety performance targets since 2018 in accordance with federal regulation, which requires state DOTs and MPOs to set highway safety targets and to measure progress against those targets annually for their respective planning areas. The TPB's highway safety targets are based on five performance measures: the number of fatalities, the fatality rate, the number of serious injuries, the serious injury rate, and the number of non-motorist fatalities and serious injuries. The targets and performance are calculated as five-year rolling averages. Regional safety targets are set by summing up the targets provided by each provider and calculating event rates using vehicle revenue mile data. TPB staff also evaluate the region's performance against the targets each year, which fosters accountability and transparency in the target-setting process.

A snapshot of the region's highway safety performance during the development of Visualize 2050 is reflected in the plan in chapter 3, which reflects on current system performance. This data helps

provide context for travel safety upon which the plan aims to improve. Likewise, the future targets for safety performance are included in chapter 7 of the plan.

STREET SMART SAFETY EDUCATION CAMPAIGN

Since 2002, COG, in coordination with the TPB, has sponsored the [Street Smart](#) regional pedestrian and bicyclist safety education campaign. The campaign uses creative print, radio, digital, and television advertisements to educate drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists about safe travel behaviors. The program is funded by the District of Columbia, Maryland, Virginia, and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) and is advised by an advisory group as well as the TPB Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee.

REGIONAL SAFETY STUDY

The TPB conducts regional safety studies to better understand the nature and frequency of roadway crashes across the region, with the goal of informing decision-making by the board. TPB staff first conducted the study in 2020. Staff developed the plan with consultant assistance following an analysis of locally sourced data and sought the advice of an advisory panel comprised of state DOT representatives, as well as the TPB Safety Subcommittee, TPB Technical Committee, and the TPB. The study identified a lack of seatbelt use, excessive speeding, and impaired driving as among the top contributing factors to traffic fatalities in the region. Visualize 2050 acknowledges the challenges with such traveler behaviors and reflects priority strategies to improving safety. An update of the study expected in Summer 2025 and will inform development of the next National Capital Region Transportation Plan.

SAFETY EVENTS

The TPB has convened stakeholders at roadway safety special events to highlight regional concern around traffic safety. In November 2022, safety officials from the District Department of Transportation (DDOT), Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT), and Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) briefed the TPB on their efforts to improve regional roadway safety at a Safety Roundtable. Subsequently, in October 2024, members of the TPB convened for the Regional Roadway Safety Summit to discuss potential actions the board could undertake to address rising roadway fatalities and serious injuries. Several recommendations were made during the summit, such as committing to the USDOT Allies in Action initiative, enhancing data analysis, and looking at ways to partner regionally through the COG Board and its members, to ensure that dangerous drivers are held accountable for their actions. These actions were affirmed by the board in November 2024 and will be implemented over the course of the next few years. The TPB's priority safety strategies are noted in Visualize 2050.