

Transportation Advisory Board
of the Metropolitan Council of the Twin Cities

ACTION TRANSMITTAL – 2021-04

DATE: February 10, 2021
TO: Transportation Advisory Board
FROM: Technical Advisory Committee
PREPARED BY: Heidi Schallberg, Senior Planner
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SUBJECT: Proposed 2021 Safety Targets
REQUESTED ACTION: Staff requests consideration of the 2021 safety performance targets for adoption by the Metropolitan Council
RECOMMENDED MOTION: That the Transportation Advisory Board recommend Council adoption of 2021 safety performance targets.

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF ACTION: All state Departments of Transportation (DOTs) and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) must adopt a program to measure system performance and set performance targets in order to monitor progress. Targets for the safety performance measures are required annually. Safety is one of five categories for federally required performance measures.

After DOTs adopt their annual statewide safety targets, MPOs are given an additional 180 days to either support the statewide target or choose an alternative target. MnDOT officially adopted its updated safety performance measures and established statewide targets on August 31, 2020. The Council must adopt updated safety performance targets no later than February 27, 2021.

Federal requirements specify five safety performance measures for both state DOTs and MPOs that must have annual targets:

1. Number of fatal injuries
2. Fatal injuries per 100 million vehicle miles travelled (VMT)
3. Number of serious injuries
4. Serious injuries per 100 million VMT
5. Number of pedestrian and bicycle fatalities and serious injuries

In the past, the Council has used the same methodology as MnDOT to calculate safety targets for the Council's metropolitan planning area. Repeating this practice for 2020 would have resulted in an increase in the Council's adopted targets for fatalities, which was of concern to local partners. As part of the adoption of the 2020 targets, the Council recommended establishing a safety performance work group to recommend a methodology for calculating future targets to address these concerns.

Last year MnDOT finalized the 2020-2024 Strategic Highway Safety Plan. This plan is intended for traffic safety partners at every level in Minnesota – state, regional, county, and local levels

of government. It acknowledges the long-term goal of zero deaths and serious injuries on roads in the state, and the Plan set a five-year goal to reduce traffic deaths to 225 or fewer statewide and serious injuries to 980 or fewer statewide by 2025, on the way to the long-term goal of zero. The 2040 Transportation Policy Plan supports the long-term goal of zero deaths and serious injuries on roads in our region.

In 2020, MnDOT also changed its methodology for calculating the required statewide safety targets, beginning with 2021 targets. This methodology is based on working toward this plan’s five-year goal, which is a nearly 35 percent reduction from 2019. Statewide, over the past 10 years, the number of fatalities has remained relatively flat. From 2015 to 2019, the 5-year rolling average has decreased by 1 percent to reach the 2025 goal, fatalities must decrease by 23 each year for Minnesota. For 2021, MnDOT’s statewide targets are 352.4 fatalities; 1,579.8 serious injuries; and 281.2 non-motorist fatalities and serious injuries. The two targets for the rates are 0.582 for the fatality rate and 2.606 for the serious injury rate.

State DOTs are obligated to make significant progress on performance against their state safety targets. There are additional federal requirements for state DOTs in the federal Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) if they fail to make significant progress. The USDOT does not place additional requirements on MPOs if they fail to make progress on their required safety targets.

We do not yet have final numbers to reflect how the region performed in 2020 in relation to its targets. As crash data and VMT numbers are finalized for 2020 later this year, we will monitor actual performance compared to our 2020 targets. *Preliminary* numbers for the seven-county region (not the full MPO planning area that includes portions of Wright and Sherburne counties) show 116 traffic fatalities for 2020, compared to our target of 106. This number could change for the MPO planning area and as the 2020 data are finalized.

For 2019, the region met two of its five targets: those for serious injuries and for the number of pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities and serious injuries.

Performance Measure	2019 Target	2019 Actual	% Difference
Number of Traffic Fatalities	108	131	+ 21%
Fatality Rate (per 100M VMT)	0.34	0.45	+ 32%
Number of Serious Injuries	748	699	-7%
Serious Injury Rate (per 100M VMT)	2.37	2.39	+1%
Number of Pedestrian/Bicyclist Fatalities + Serious Injuries	190	182	-4%

Recommended Action:

The Safety Performance Work Group recommends the following methodology for setting the region’s required safety targets:

Carry over the regional 2020 targets for 2021, then reduce the targets annually to reach our region’s share of MnDOT’s 2025 SHSP goals.

This methodology was suggested by the work group after reviewing three other proposals. This approach was supported for consistency with the Strategic Highway Safety Plan goal and ensuring targets would not increase year to year over the five-year period.

Using this methodology, targets would be:

Year	Number of Fatal Injuries	Rate of Fatal Injuries Per 100 Million Vehicle Miles Traveled	Number of Serious Injuries	Rate of Serious Injuries Per 100 Million Vehicle Miles Traveled	Number of Pedestrian/Bicyclist Fatalities + Serious Injuries
2021	106	0.36	738	2.49	181
2022	98	0.33	669	2.24	164
2023	90	0.30	601	2.00	148
2024	82	0.27	532	1.76	131
2025	74	0.24	464	1.53	115

Later years are shown as an illustration of this progress toward the goal. The Council will still be asked to set targets annually. The targets should help the region evaluate how we are doing on these safety goals over the time frame covered by the state safety plan. Under this method, our targets fall annually by approximately 8 fatal injuries, 67 serious injuries, and 17 pedestrian and bicycle fatal and serious injuries.

Based on average performance from 2015-2019, the region's share of 2025 statewide goals are:

- 74 fatal injuries,
- 464 serious injuries, and
- 115 pedestrian and bicycle fatal and serious injuries.

RELATIONSHIP TO REGIONAL POLICY: The current 2040 Transportation Policy Plan includes a listing of performance measures used to monitor and assess system performance. These performance measures support the six over-arching transportation system goals of the TPP. The proposed safety performance measures and targets directly support the Safety and Security goal of the 2040 TPP, while fulfilling the federal requirements of an MPO. Achieving regional safety targets will take coordinated action on resource allocation, policies, and investment decisions from partners at all levels in the region.

STAFF ANALYSIS: Overall, the metro tends to represent a lower percentage of the statewide fatalities and serious injuries compared to our share of the population, except for pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities and serious injuries, where the region tends to have a higher share of the statewide numbers. The desired trend is to continue to make progress on reducing deaths and serious injuries for people traveling by all modes within the region.

COMMITTEE COMMENTS AND ACTION: In January 2020, TAB recommended the creation of a Safety Performance Work Group to evaluate the best methodology for setting the regional targets. Members for this work group were recruited from TAC members in addition to coordinating with appropriate staff from MnDOT. Work group members included:

- Lisa Freese, Scott County, Outgoing TAC Chair
- Jon Solberg, MnDOT Metro Planning, Program Management and Transit Office, Incoming TAC Chair
- Kevin Roggenbuck, Ramsey County, Outgoing TAC Planning Chair
- Ethan Fawley, City of Minneapolis
- Bill Dermody, City of Saint Paul

- Reuben Collins, City of Saint Paul
- Deanna Collins, MnDOT Office of Transportation System Management
- Derek Leuer, MnDOT Office of Traffic Engineering
- Eric DeVoe, MnDOT Office of Traffic Engineering
- Elaine Koutsoukos, TAB Coordinator
- Steve Peterson, Metropolitan Council Staff

In the fall, staff researched how other MPOs have been addressing this requirement and different methodologies peer MPOs have commonly used. This scan found most MPOs support state DOT safety targets or apply their state DOT's method to their region. A growing number of MPOs are setting their own targets based on their own methodology. Typically, these MPO methodologies are based on a future aspirational vision or plan for injury reduction.

On December 18, 2020, the Safety Performance Work Group met to review this information and three potential methodologies the region could use to set these safety targets, including MnDOT's current methodology. Two other options included using the MnDOT methodology with a cap if it meant a target would increase or a linear decline to zero deaths by 2040, which is the time horizon for the region's Transportation Policy Plan. At this meeting, members proposed an additional methodology as the work group's recommendation, as described above. This was the preferred option for its consistency with the Strategic Highway Safety Plan five-year goal and ensuring targets for the number of fatalities and serious injuries would not potentially increase year to year over this period. A concern about using MnDOT's new methodology was that targets could still increase year to year because it is based on using a 5-year rolling average.

At its February 3, 2021, meeting the Technical Advisory Committee voted unanimously to recommend that TAB recommend the adoption of the 2021 safety performance targets.

ROUTING

TO	ACTION REQUESTED	DATE SCHEDULED / COMPLETED
TAC Planning Committee	Review & Recommend	January 14, 2021
Technical Advisory Committee	Review & Recommend	February 3, 2021
Transportation Advisory Board	Review & Recommend	<i>February 17, 2021</i>
Metropolitan Council Transportation Committee	Review & Recommend	<i>February 22, 2021</i>
Metropolitan Council	Review & Adopt	<i>February 24, 2021</i>