

Action Transmittal

Transportation Advisory Board



Committee Meeting Date: December 18, 2024

Date: December 6, 2024

Action Transmittal: 2024-52

Adoption of 2025 Safety Performance Targets

To: Transportation Advisory Board
From: Technical Advisory Committee
Prepared By: Jed Hanson, Senior Planner, 651-602-1716

Requested Action

That the Transportation Advisory Board recommend the 2025 safety performance targets for adoption by the Metropolitan Council.

Recommended Motion

That the Transportation Advisory Board recommend adoption of the Option A 2025 safety performance targets based on the 2020-2024 Minnesota Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) goal, which advance a long-term goal of zero deaths:

- Number of all fatalities: no more than 74
- Fatal injuries per 100 million VMT: no more than 0.26
- Number of all serious injuries: no more than 464
- Serious injuries per 100 million VMT: no more than 1.64
- Pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities and serious injuries: no more than 115

Background and Purpose

All State Departments of Transportation (DOTs) and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) must have performance measurement programs and set targets to monitor progress. Targets for the safety performance measures are required annually. The safety targets serve a dual purpose:

- Inform planning and programming to reduce fatal and serious injuries
- Track performance of the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)

After the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) receives statewide safety targets from MnDOT annually in August, MPOs must either support the statewide target or choose an alternative target by February 27 the following year. Federal requirements specify five safety performance measures for both state DOTs and MPOs that must have annual targets:

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

State DOTs are required to make significant progress on achieving their statewide safety targets; they are subject to additional HSIP requirements if they fail to make significant progress. MPOs are not subject to additional federal requirements if they fail to make significant progress.

Option A. Continue method based on 2020-2024 SHSP

The Met Council’s current method sets safety targets on a straight-line decline from 2020/2021 targets to the region’s share of statewide goals in the 2020-2024 Minnesota Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP). The SHSP acknowledges the long-term goal of zero deaths and serious injuries on roads in the state, and the plan sets 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 SHSP is currently undergoing a regular update, so the current target setting method will need to be reconsidered in 2026. Based on the current SHSP, the Met Council’s current method sets targets on pace to reach zero in 2035 for fatal injuries, and 2032 for serious injuries and non-motorized fatal and serious injuries. Meeting these targets would be exceptionally challenging considering asset lifetimes and the lag time between programming and capital improvements.

Safety targets using the Option A method would be:

- Number of all fatalities: no more than 74
- Fatal injuries per 100 million VMT: no more than 0.26
- Number of all serious injuries: no more than 464
- Serious injuries per 100 million VMT: no more than 1.64
- Pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities and serious injuries: no more than 115

Option B. Change to method based on TPP objective

Worsening safety performance since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic has caused a wide gap between adopted targets and achievable short-term performance improvements. A slower rate of decline may be more consistent with the purpose of tracking achievable improvements.

The method’s basis could be changed to align with the draft Imagine 2050 Transportation Policy Plan, setting targets on a straight-line decline from current 2024 targets to zero in all measures by 2050. The objective states that “people do not die or face life-changing injuries when using any form of transportation.” For the purposes of setting short-term targets, Met Council staff interpret this objective as seeking to reach zero in these measures no later than the 2050 planning horizon.

The public comment process for the Imagine 2050 TPP has concluded. Feedback related to this objective was generally supportive. No changes to the objective are planned prior to anticipated adoption in February.

Safety targets using the Option B method would be:

- Number of all fatalities: no more than 79
- Fatal injuries per 100 million VMT: no more than 0.28
- Number of all serious injuries: no more than 512
- Serious injuries per 100 million VMT: no more than 1.81
- Pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities and serious injuries: no more than 126

Pending Rulemaking

In 2024, the Federal Highway Administration issued a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking related to the National Performance Management Measures, including safety targets. The draft rule may require MPOs to [set constantly declining targets](#), may [define the baseline](#) used in future target setting, and may [change the frequency](#) of target setting and reporting. The region’s target setting methodology will need to be revised as soon as 2026 if this becomes a final rule.



Relationship to Regional Policy

The current 2040 Transportation Policy Plan (TPP) includes performance measures to monitor and assess system performance. The proposed options for safety performance measures and targets directly support the Safety and Security goal of the 2040 TPP, while fulfilling federal requirements for an MPO. Reducing crash injuries to or below the regional safety targets will require coordinated action on resource allocation, policies, and investment decisions from partners at all levels in the region.

Staff Analysis

2023 Performance

- Both fatal and serious injuries slightly fell compared to 2022, but these outcomes remain elevated compared to the three-year average prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Serious injuries remain at an elevated level following a sharp rise in 2022.
- Safety performance targets were not achieved in 2023 (Table 1).

Table 1: Measure Performance, 2023, Metropolitan Planning Area*

Measure	2017-2019 Average	2021-2023 Average	2023 Actual	2023 Target
All fatalities	130	171	147	90
Fatal injury rate per 100m VMT	0.44	0.63	0.53	0.33
All serious injuries	796	888	924	600
Serious injury rate per 100m VMT	2.71	3.25	3.32	2.18
Non-motorized fatal and serious injuries	202	207	199	147
Pedestrian fatalities	27	33	29	N/A
Bicyclist fatalities	6	3	4	N/A
Pedestrian serious injuries	127	120	112	N/A
Bicyclist serious injuries	42	50	54	N/A

* Data courtesy of MnDOT.



Preliminary 2024 Performance

- Preliminary data for January-October show fatal and serious injuries have remained roughly flat compared to the same period in 2023, but these outcomes remain elevated compared to the three-year average prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Non-motorized fatal and serious injuries rose in 2024 compared to the January-October period for years prior. Total non-motorized fatal and serious injuries in 2024 have already exceeded the year-end total for 2023.
- Safety performance targets will not be achieved in 2024 (Table 2).

Table 2: Preliminary Performance, Jan-Oct 2024, Metropolitan Planning Area*

Measure	2017-2019 Average	2021-2023 Average	2024 Actual	2024 Target (Jan-Dec)
All fatalities	111	145	126	82
All serious injuries	685	761	781	532
Non-motorized fatal and serious injuries	168	178	208	131
Pedestrian fatalities	22	25	29	N/A
Bicyclist fatalities	4	3	3	N/A
Pedestrian serious injuries	100	104	122	N/A
Bicyclist serious injuries	41	47	54	N/A

*Preliminary data courtesy of MnDOT. The final data may change.

Committee Comments and Actions

Met Council staff presented TAC Planning and TAC with two target setting options for consideration, described above in this action transmittal. TAC Planning had a lengthy discussion about the merits of both options and unanimously recommended Option A targets, with the understanding this conversation would continue following the updates of the Minnesota Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) and the Transportation Policy Plan (TPP). The TAC also recommended Option A targets, continuing the existing method without change. Discussion among these committees covered:

- Differences in the update frequency of the planning documents informing the targets, and the underlying medium-term goal in the SHSP and the long-term objective in the TPP. The SHSP receives an update every 5 years, and the present 2020-2024 SHSP establishes a medium-term statewide goal for 2025. The TPP receives a major update every 10 years and a minor update every 5 years, and eliminating death and serious injuries by or before 2050 is consistent with the draft Imagine 2050 TPP safety objective. Both plans are currently undergoing updates and pending adoption in 2025.
- The pending Federal Highway Administration rulemaking may prompt method re-evaluation next year, so changing the method this year may be too early.
- Option B targets are higher and could send a message that a higher level of death and serious injury are acceptable, though at some point continued divergence between actual performance and targets may prompt evaluating whether the targets remain reasonable and achievable. A committee member noted there were not large differences between Options A and B. A committee member indicated preference to remain with the



method that sets lower targets unless the committee viewed it as unreasonable to reach that target with more concentrated effort.

- A committee member questioned why targets so divergent from actual performance are proposed. Staff answered declining targets based on safety plans and policy were presented due to prior policymaker discussions on target setting.
- A committee members inquired about reasons for actual performance diverging from the targets, and a member acknowledged the challenge presenting preliminary data without detail to describe trend causes. Staff answered worsening performance could be the result of multiple factors, including travel changes since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, and that a metropolitan planning organization’s largest area of safety influence is through capital investments.
- Committee members further discussed safety planning frameworks (like the Safe Systems Approach), the challenge meeting safety investment needs with currently available funding, and desire for future description how these targets are used by agencies in investment decisions.

Routing

To	Action Requested	Date Completed (Scheduled)
TAC Planning	Review & Recommend	November 14, 2024
Technical Advisory Committee	Review & Recommend	December 4, 2024
Transportation Advisory Board	Review & Recommend	<i>December 18, 2024</i>
Metropolitan Council Transportation Committee	Review & Recommend	<i>January 13, 2025</i>
Metropolitan Council	Adopt	<i>January 22, 2025</i>

