

CHAPTER 5



Implementation & Evaluation

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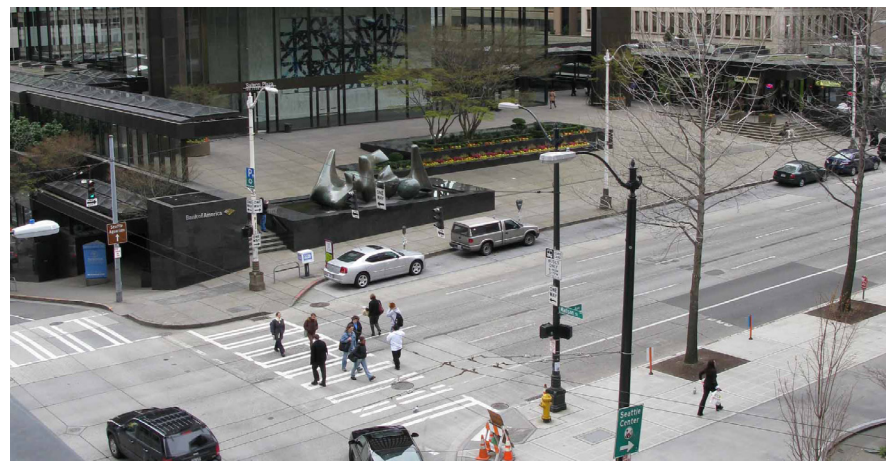
5.1 SYSTEM COLLABORATION AND INTEGRATION

To function within the Safe System Approach (SSA) framework, all relevant partners must collaborate. Partner identification must be part of this process. Collaboration levels as follows:

1. Sharing Information
2. Coordinating/Adjusting Strategies
3. Sharing Resources
4. Defining Shared Goals

For the Safe System Approach to work, we need to change the way we think about the transportation system and traffic safety – including our roles and the way we operate. The “Four E” approach to traffic safety—engineering, education, enforcement, and emergency services—was helpful to describe essential approaches, but it did not necessarily lead to successful integration. The Safe System Approach requires us to think differently and expand upon the Four Es, instead of these areas operating in their own silos. Thinking differently includes changing how we prioritize, collaborate, and select safety projects, activities, and programs. We need to implement a safe transportation system, using the principles and elements of the SSA, that reflects a prosocial traffic safety culture grounded in an equity framework. Otherwise, our efforts for system change may only bring us back to the same conditions we are experiencing today.

Plans for making significant changes can be met with resistance. It is common to hear voices of judgment question the merit of planned change (“this is nothing new”), express cynicism about the intended goal (“zero traffic fatalities is not possible”) and convey fear about change itself (“I don’t know what to do”).



Just as change is an intentional process, managing these voices to support change also requires conscious effort. We must create hope for change and reframe these voices to recognize our strengths:

- **Curiosity:** “Let me dig deeper to learn what is new about the Safe System Approach.”
- **Imagination:** “What would it take to make zero fatalities possible?”
- **Optimism:** “Change is possible if we all work together.”

The foundations for change are in place and the Target Zero Plan builds upon them. In Washington, this includes committing to safety as the top priority, choosing broad-based partners, and aligning challenges and solutions with the SSA principles and related actions. These three components are helping those leading positive changes in transportation safety to think differently and make progress toward improved safety outcomes.

Traditional Safety Partners

Traditional traffic safety partners have formal roles with associated responsibility and accountability for system safety (e.g., elected officials, state agencies, law enforcement agencies, healthcare providers, etc.). They are often engaged in the development and implementation of strategic plans and establish safety goals. These partners' decisions about how to design, operate, and manage the system (e.g., funding, land uses, capital investments, policy, legislation, programs, and culture) contribute to increase or decrease the likelihood of future crashes. Policymakers control the budgets for safety investments related to the road and road user behaviors, enforcing the rules, and/or educating the road users.

Within the Safe System Approach, each partner needs to understand and implement their role in the context of the entire system and its safety outcomes. This approach includes extending their work to provide expert input for plans beyond their immediate policy areas, building support and action for equitable safety across multiple systems. They can also evaluate internal policies and traffic safety culture around safe driving by their employees while on the job or using agency vehicles, leading their communities by example. Collectively, the safety partners can thus maximize their efforts, leverage each other's skills and strengths, and work together to create a system where death and serious injuries are not inevitable.

To truly make progress toward reducing fatal and serious injury crashes, safety needs to be:

1. The primary goal for all transportation and safety agencies, meaning that safety goals are set and measured, and resources are dedicated to improving or maintaining safety.
2. A focus of all transportation and safety staff and leaders, regardless of role.
3. Integrated into agency responsibilities by providing education, training, and tools to help agencies implement safety strategies and countermeasures.
4. Part of an agency's accountability through performance measurement.

Leadership has a key role in creating and sustaining these conditions and in doing so within an equity framework. For example, the WTSC is chaired by the governor and consists of 10 Commissioners representing state, county, and city governments (e.g., WSDOT, WSP, Health Care Authority, and the Washington State Association of Counties, among others). Leadership is also critical to keep the focus on safety when it might appear to conflict with other priorities, such as speed or convenience.

5.1 System Collaboration and Integration

Washington has already developed several stand-alone safety policies and integrated safety into critical transportation programs and plans. These include the Washington State Department of Transportation Secretary's 2023 Executive Order Advancing the Safe System Approach for All Road Users, Complete Streets legislation adopted in 2022 under Move Ahead Washington, WSDOT Design Manual modifications for Complete Streets using the Safe System, a Roundabouts First Policy, the State Active Transportation Plan published in 2021, and the Injury Minimization and Speed Management Policy Elements and Implementation Recommendations. WSDOT further committed to strategic plan goals that support the equity-based Safe System Approach; the definition of the agency's goals for diversity, equity, and inclusion specifies: "We create good policy that effectively responds to the needs of underserved communities and creates sound, equitable investment strategies."

Each safety policy provides specific opportunities and guidance to integrate the Safe System principles and strategies into decision-making. The goal of these documents is to make it clear for anyone to understand how, when, and where they can consider safety at points in the planning or project development process. Operationalizing the Safe System Approach requires the development of policies, processes, tools, and educating the workforce on how, when, and where safety can be considered in planning and project development. Tools to implement these policies and directives are essential. Additional efforts to engage influencer partners during the education process can also assist influencer partners in understanding their role in a safe system.



Influencer Safety Partners

From a system perspective, multiple factors lead to a crash and determine its severity. Because so many system factors come into play during a crash, we need a broader range of partners at the table. Influencer partners are those without a formal traffic safety role, but with an interest and influence over safety within their social environment (e.g., families, schools, workplaces, cultural organizations, etc.). These influencer safety partners are themselves safe road users, so they can help influence by example and by direct engagement.

We can engage most road users who are safe as allies to help influence others. Because these behaviors are intended to help others, they are called “prosocial” behaviors. Examples of prosocial behaviors include modeling safe behaviors, taking actions that encourage others to be safe, and championing community safety goals. Some examples of prosocial behavior within our social environment including family, schools, and workplaces:

- **Families** can talk about and make rules about cell phone use and other distractions. They can put in place actions like muting phones or using “Do Not Disturb” functions while driving.
- **Friends** can utilize a designated sober driver.
- **Schools** can encourage student-led projects that clarify norms about distracted driving and encourage not using cell phones while driving.
- **Community-based organizations** can deliver culturally relevant educational campaigns, partner in outreach and engagement for transportation plans and projects, and provide access to their buildings and events with the safety of all types of road users in mind.



- **Public Leaders**, including legislators, county commissioners, city council members, and directors of public agencies can influence people and policy to make the transportation system safer.
- **Employers** can implement model safe driving policies, including disallowing participation in calls or meetings while driving, requiring employees to observe the posted speed limit (or drive slower when conditions warrant) while driving for work purposes, and providing updated training as types of facilities and traffic laws change.
- **Voters** can talk with elected officials about the importance of budgets and policies that support traffic safety with a Safe System Approach.

Such behaviors are considered discretionary because they are not formal requirements of an assigned traffic safety role. Instead, these discretionary behaviors are motivated by our relationships with other people in our social environment (social capital).

5.2 IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

The Target Zero Plan is the framework for engaging road users, traditional and influencer partners, planners, engineers, law enforcement agencies, and emergency medical service providers across the state in improving transportation safety in Washington. With focus and bold action, the vision of zero fatalities and zero serious injuries on Washington roadways by 2030 can be achieved.

The plan serves as the foundation for the strategy and integration of behavioral and engineering safety practices into all aspects of land use planning, transportation project programming, policy, and other safety-related activities in the state. While safety-specific plans and programs are critical to achieving the goal of zero fatalities and serious injuries in Washington, it also is important that traditional transportation planning, design, operations and maintenance, and programs and policies proactively integrate safety into their decision-making processes.

Infrastructure projects will be implemented through the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP), the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) discretionary grant program, and other state, regional, local, and Tribal funding sources. Behavioral strategies will be implemented through the Triennial Highway Safety Plan and annual grant application.

To implement the Target Zero Plan, we must take actions consistent with the Safe System Approach principles and elements, focused in the near-term on the data-informed emphasis areas. As locations and detailed contributing factors are identified and prioritized, proven and innovative safety countermeasures must be funded, designed, and implemented to save lives in Washington.



5.3 MEASURES AND ACCOUNTABILITIES

Transportation safety partners, including WSDOT and WTSC, continually monitor progress on the performance of transportation programs and measures with annual reporting on the Target Zero Plan, the Highway Safety Improvement Program, and the Triennial Highway Safety Plan.

Washington's safety partners use performance metrics to track and understand system performance and needs over time. The goal is to make our efforts as effective as possible. Data from crashes involving fatalities and serious injuries form the basis for the emphasis areas within Target Zero. Safety partners can use this information to identify contributing factors that are leading to fatalities and serious injuries throughout the system.

For instance, Target Zero has identified lane departures as an emphasis area based on the proportion of fatalities and injuries that occurred in lane departure crashes. The next step would be to screen the network to identify segments or intersections experiencing more than the

expected number of lane departure crashes. Further analysis of the contributing factors to these crashes can then provide insights into the type of countermeasures that would have a high potential to reduce the number and severity of this particular group of crashes. These countermeasures can be connected to one or more of the Safe System Approach Elements: Safer Land Use, Safer Road Users, Safer Roads, Safer Speeds, Safer Vehicles, or Post-crash Care.

The performance metrics help us evaluate how effective these strategies have been in reducing the targeted types of crashes. Target Zero does not evaluate an individual project's or program's effectiveness. Instead, it focuses on the overall performance of the system, setting performance-based goals across emphasis areas.