

OFFICE OF SAFETY

SAFETY COMPASS

NEWSLETTER



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

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Safety Compass Newsletter

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Winter 2024: Volume 18, Issue 1

ZERO IS OUR GOAL
A SAFE SYSTEM IS HOW WE GET THERE

Welcome to the refreshed Safety Compass e-newsletter! To aid readers, we have moved to a more concise format so you can get all the latest news at a glance. We will continue to post each issue on the [Safety Compass Newsletter web page](#).

In this issue:

[A Message from the FHWA Associate Administrator for Safety, Cheryl Walker](#)

News and Updates

[The 11th Edition of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices is Now Live!](#)

[U.S. DOT Awards \\$817 Million in SS4A Grants to 385 Communities](#)

Advancing the State of the Practice

[States Asked to Accelerate Proven Safety Countermeasures and Technology Nationwide](#)

[Congratulations to the Recipients of the 2023 National Roadway Safety Awards!](#)

New Resource Roundup

[Resource Helps Prioritize Infrastructure-Based Countermeasures to Reduce Roadway Fatalities](#)

[Report Focuses on Applying the Safe System Approach to the Urban Core](#)

[One-Stop Shop: The New Intelligent Transportation Systems and Roadway Safety Webpage is Now Live](#)

[Minimum Pavement Marking Retroreflectivity – Explainer Videos for Executives and Practitioners](#)

[Equity in Roadway Safety Webinar Series Now Online](#)

Funding

[New Poster Illustrates FHWA and FTA Funding Programs](#)

[Need Funds for an Innovative Idea?](#)

Announcements

[Upcoming Conferences and Events](#)

Message from the Associate Administrator for Safety, Cheryl Walker



*Cheryl Walker,
Associate Administrator
for Safety.*

Welcome to our new and refreshed Safety Compass—more concise but still chock full of great information! As you read through this edition of our newsletter, I hope you'll sense the same groundswell of support that we are feeling for safer roadways across our Nation.

What's different about this moment is an ever-expanding sense of shared responsibility and momentum. We see communities across the country focused more than ever on reducing fatalities and serious injuries. Great examples of this include the 620 local, regional, and Tribal communities who successfully applied for Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) grants in FY 2023.

Like many of us, I enjoy a good map. Our team has made an interactive one that shows the SS4A-funded projects. [It's terrific to see the broad reach of these grants all across the map.](#) We are excited about the projects and action plans that we will see in these communities in the years to come. These local communities are doing great work, and they certainly are not alone in focusing on safety.

States, through their [Strategic Highway Safety Plans](#), are working systematically to improve safety on the roadways they build and maintain, and many are collaborating with and supporting local efforts. As further noted in this edition of the Safety Compass, States are implementing safety throughout their roadway systems as they accelerate the use of Proven Safety Countermeasures. State DOTs also are joining as Allies in Action in the U.S. DOT's [Call to Action campaign](#), which invites stakeholders to share how they are embracing the National Roadway Safety Strategy (NRSS) vision of eliminating roadway fatalities.

I'm so heartened to see safety as a top emphasis and priority for so many organizations and communities, large and small. I know this important work is in the best of hands as I step away from my role as FHWA's Associate Administrator for Safety. After almost 20 years of service with the U.S. Department of Transportation, I am retiring at the end of January. I can't find the words to describe what an amazing privilege it has been to work with so many of you in the safety discipline and to help champion your life-saving work. I look forward to seeing and hearing about the many safety improvements to come.

Thank you all for your efforts, and let's all be safe out there!

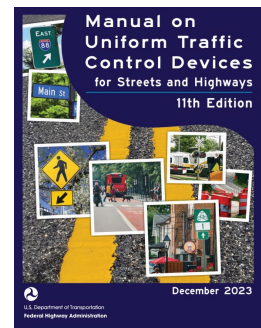
Cheryl Walker
Associate Administrator for Safety

[Return to top](#)

NEWS AND UPDATES

The 11th Edition of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices is Now Live!

A final rule adopting the [11th Edition of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways](#) (MUTCD) was published in the *Federal Register* on December 19, 2023. The manual, last updated edition in 2009, is the national standard for traffic signs, signals, and pavement markings to ensure a uniform



and predictable environment for people who walk, bike, and drive. It is an important guide used every day by transportation professionals for roadway safety, and the 11th edition incorporates extensive input from members of the public. The new MUTCD includes a number of updates to improve safety for pedestrians, bicyclists, and all road users. Please see the [Federal Register notice](#) for a detailed discussion of the major changes from the 2009 Edition.

[Return to top](#)

U.S. DOT Awards \$817 Million in SS4A Grants to 385 Communities

On December 13, 2023, the [U.S. Department of Transportation announced the award of 385 Safe Streets and Roads for All grants](#) totaling \$817 million to regional, local, and Tribal communities. These funds will help tackle the preventable crisis of deaths on the Nation's roads by employing the Safe System Approach: safer people, roads, vehicles, speeds, and post-crash care. The announcement includes 48 implementation grants focused on safety projects and strategies, and 337 grants for planning and demonstration activities. These awards are in addition to grants to 235 communities totaling \$82 million, which were announced in October. Combined, 620 communities received nearly \$900 million as part of the FY 2023 funding round. This first-of-its-kind program was created by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and is a part of the more than \$14 billion in the law dedicated to roadway safety, from FY22-FY26. The next Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for SS4A is expected to open in February 2024. [Encourage local and Tribal communities near you to apply!](#)

[Return to top](#)

ADVANCING THE STATE OF THE PRACTICE

States Asked to Accelerate Proven Safety Countermeasures and Technology Nationwide

FHWA continues to advance [U.S. DOT's National Roadway Safety Strategy](#) by recruiting more [Allies in Action](#). At the conclusion of the AASHTO Safety Summit in October, Administrator Shailen Bhatt asked each State to identify Proven Safety Countermeasures (PSCs) or other emerging technologies that have the most life-saving potential and to make a specific commitment to increase the deployment of those PSCs. FHWA's PSC initiative is a collection of 28 research-backed strategies; each one addresses at least one safety focus area: speed management, intersections, roadway departures, or pedestrians/bicyclists. FHWA offers an array of resources to help State, Tribal, and local agencies identify the most effective countermeasures for their unique challenges.

Review, bookmark, and share these PSC documents with your network to improve safety on our Nation's roadways for all road users.

- The FHWA [Proven Safety Countermeasures webpage](#) contains a compendium of all 28 PSCs—recently updated to include Crash Modification Number IDs for each cited crash reduction, where applicable—plus individual fact sheets, and [an interactive search tool](#).
- [Increased Federal Share under 23 U.S.C. 120\(c\)\(1\)](#). Learn more about how certain safety projects, including many PSCs, are eligible for 100 percent Federal share.
- [Proven Safety Countermeasures in Rural Communities](#).
- [NCHRP 20-05, Topic 55-10 Implementation of the Proven Safety Countermeasures](#). This synthesis will review and document DOT practices for implementing FHWA's PSCs. Keep an eye out for a survey that will be sent out to State DOTs.

[Return to top](#)

Congratulations to the Recipients of the 2023 National Roadway Safety Awards!

The biennial National Roadway Safety Awards competition is sponsored by FHWA and the Roadway Safety Foundation (RSF) to recognize achievements in roadway safety that move the United States toward zero deaths and serious injuries on the Nation's roadways. The 2023 awards ceremony was held on November 29 in Washington, D.C. Speakers included Senator Tom Carper (D-

DE), FHWA Administrator Shailen Bhatt, and FHWA Associate Administrator for Safety Cheryl Walker. The Infrastructure & Operational Improvements category winners included the Acadiana Planning Commission, Florida DOT, Illinois Tollway, North Carolina DOT, and Texas DOT. The winners in the Program Planning, Development & Evaluation category included Caltrans, Delaware DOT, Minnesota DOT, the Port Authority of NY & NJ, and the South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization; with honorable mentions going to Nevada DOT and Virginia DOT. [Visit the RSF website to view all the winning projects and honorable mentions.](#)



Photo Credit: Ashley Schaerfl, Mattox Photography

2023 National Roadway Safety Award Winners

[Return to top](#)

NEW RESOURCE ROUNDUP

Resource Helps Prioritize Infrastructure-Based Countermeasures to Reduce Roadway Fatalities

For agencies and practitioners seeking zero roadway fatalities through the Safe System Approach, knowing where to start can be a challenge. FHWA has released a new resource to help prioritize engineering and infrastructure-based countermeasures. The 38-page [Safe System Roadway Design Hierarchy](#) (FHWA-SA-22-069) outlines a four-tiered approach that is general in nature and applicable to any scenario, from a city street to an interstate freeway. The tiers include Remove Severe Conflicts; Reduce Vehicle Speeds; Manage Conflicts in Time; and Increase Attentiveness and Awareness. In the coming months, the Office of Safety will publish supplemental resources, including Safe System Alignment Frameworks for projects and policies, and will offer training on how to use the design hierarchy and alignment frameworks. | [Karen Scurry](#)

[Return to top](#)

Report Focuses on Applying the Safe System Approach to the Urban Core

The FHWA released the [Safe System Approach for the Urban Core Informational Report](#) to outline how practitioners can apply the Safe System Approach framework in policy, program, and project decision-making processes through proven safety approaches for the urban core. The report provides users a series of checklists for prioritizing safety in transportation decisions while also addressing key challenges specific to the urban core context, such as higher volume urban arterials, speed management, urban intersections, and safety of vulnerable road users. This informational report also includes a set of 10 case studies highlighting noteworthy practices. | [Anyesha Mookherjee](#)



Source: City of Fremont.

Protected Intersection in Fremont, CA, at Civic Center Drive and Walnut Avenue.

[Return to top](#)

One-Stop Shop: The New Intelligent Transportation Systems and Roadway Safety Web Page is Now Live

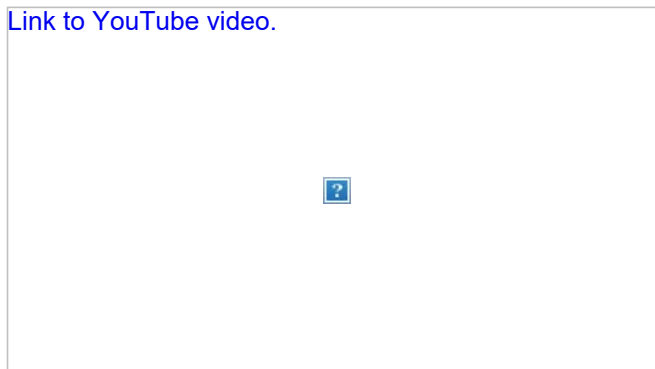
The FHWA Office of Safety has recently revamped its [Intelligent Transportation Systems \(ITS\) Safety webpage](#). The improved webpage covers ITS and the Safe System Approach, technology-based Proven Safety Countermeasures, training opportunities, and links to other useful and relevant websites across the U.S. DOT. It also highlights the many Federal funding opportunities currently available for safety efforts that incorporate ITS as well as training courses. This new webpage is a one-stop shop for those involved in roadway safety to leverage technology to save more lives, faster. | [Norah Ocel](#)

[Return to top](#)

Minimum Pavement Marking Retroreflectivity – Explainer Videos for Executives and Practitioners

A year ago, FHWA published the final rule establishing minimum pavement marking retroreflectivity levels. The first two videos of what will be several are live and ready for viewing. The [Executive Overview video](#) is geared toward senior and executive leaders of transportation agencies and provides a high-level overview of the final rule and its requirements. The [Practitioner video](#) is more in depth and helps practitioners understand the key points of the rulemaking, decide which roads on the system the rule applies to, what methods are available to them to implement the rule, and what constitutes compliance with the final rule. Future videos will go into greater detail about the methods for maintaining minimum pavement marking retroreflectivity for practitioners and inspectors at transportation agencies. | [Paul LaFleur](#)

[Link to YouTube video.](#)



Source: FHWA.

[Return to top](#)

Equity in Roadway Safety Webinar Series Now Online

In 2023, FHWA hosted four webinars that featured tools and strategies that State and local agencies can apply to transportation programs and projects to close disparities in roadway fatalities. Speakers included more than 25 State, regional, and local agency leaders and staff as well as academics and non-profit representatives. The sessions included a leadership panel on overcoming barriers to institutionalize equity; a workshop on tools to conduct equitable data analysis; strategies for meaningful public involvement; and discussions on elevating equity and safety in project prioritization.

[Watch the recorded webinars now](#) and stay tuned for our 2024 series, which will be posted to the [Equity in Roadway Safety Webinar Series webpage](#). | [Anthony Boutros](#)

[Return to top](#)

FUNDING

New Poster Illustrates FHWA and FTA Funding Programs

FHWA's Complete Streets Initiative has produced a [poster](#) that shows all FHWA and FTA funding programs that can be used for multi-modal projects. The e-poster includes links to each program. Interested in learning more? Visit the FHWA [Complete Streets Funding site](#), which also offers guidance, technical assistance, and other resources that support implementation of Complete Streets policies.



[Return to top](#)

Need Funds for an Innovative Idea?

Are you looking to deploy an innovation on a highway project and need funding to offset the costs? The State Transportation Innovation Council (STIC) Incentive Program supports the costs of standardizing innovative practices in a State transportation agency or other public sector STIC. Learn about [innovations your peers have deployed](#) and visit the [STIC Incentive Program Guidance](#) site for more details.

[Return to top](#)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Upcoming Conferences and Events

[American Traffic Safety Services Association \(ATSSA\) Annual Convention and Traffic Expo](#), February 2–6, 2024 | San Diego, CA.

Attendees to this annual conference will connect with industry leaders, discover the latest safety solutions, and capitalize on the newest innovations to advance roadway safety.

[Lifesavers Conference](#), April 7–9, 2024 | Denver, CO. This conference features the latest highway safety research, best practices, and cutting-edge initiatives.

[2024 National Planning Conference](#), April 13–16, 2024 | Minneapolis, MN. Sponsored by the American Planning Association (APA), NPC24 enables participants to connect with the professional planning community. NPC24 core content areas include sessions ranging in topic from climate action to digitalization, to diversity and inclusive design, to transportation.

[ITS America Conference & Expo](#), April 22–25, 2024 | Phoenix, AZ. The focus of this year's event is Accelerating Digital Transformation and explores the technologies and solutions that will enable a better future.

[2nd International Conference and Peer Exchange on Roadside Safety](#), June 23–26, 2024 | Orlando, FL. The primary objective of TRB's 2nd International Roadside Safety Conference (IRSC) is to support and advance global efforts to reduce deaths and serious injuries associated with roadway departure crashes.

[Return to top](#)

The Safety Compass Newsletter

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The Safety Compass is available online at the FHWA Office of Safety web site at: <https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/newsletter/safetycompass/>.

We welcome your comments and highway safety-related articles. The purpose of this newsletter is to increase highway safety awareness and information and to provide resources to help save lives.

We encourage readers to submit highway safety articles that might be of value to the highway safety community. Send your comments, questions, and articles for review electronically to Tina Tennessen at: christina.tennessen@dot.gov.