

WORKPLAN FOR DEVELOPING THE STRATEGIC HIGHWAY SAFETY PLAN

Background

CHSP Development

In 2004 the Office of Traffic, Safety and Operations (OTSO), developed a Comprehensive Highway Safety Plan (CHSP) designed to implement the vision of Toward Zero Deaths (TZD). TZD is an aggressive, revolutionary vision to reduce roadway fatalities. The TZD concept and CHSP have been developed cooperatively with the Department of Public Safety. Other Mn/DOT transportation partners were involved and briefed about the CHSP. The CHSP was drafted with input from many stakeholders for the express purpose of providing guidance to *all* jurisdictions for the development of improvement projects and programs which drive Minnesota toward meeting that aggressive safety goal. The CHSP approach is revolutionary in that it does embrace all levels of roads *and* because it promotes a combination of both reactive/corrective responses to safety issues along with specific, cost-effective proactive strategies.

SAFETEA-LU Requirements

With the passage of the most recent federal transportation act update (SAFETEA-LU), all states are required to have a CHSP-like Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) in order to maintain critical levels of federal funding. Because the current CHSP does not meet all the requirements contained in SAFETEA-LU, an update is necessary; in order for Minnesota to meet the SHSP requirement, the current CHSP must be revised and renamed.

Maintaining CHSP Focus

For Minnesota, SHSP development is fundamentally an update of the CHSP that will build on the change of direction for safety strategy that was contained in the first plan. The CHSP shifted emphasis toward a broader approach to the implementation of safety projects by concentrating on low cost, system wide, *proactive* improvements on *all* roadways, and this emphasis will continue to be a priority with the SHSP.

While the current CHSP contains most of the necessary documentation required to meet the requirements of SAFETEA-LU for a SHSP, the CHSP will be updated by utilizing more recent data and integrating portions of other related plans such as Mn/DOT's Heavy Commercial Vehicle Safety Plan and ITS Safety Plan. A broader outreach effort will also involve a greater number of transportation partners in the SHSP development effort.

SHSP Plan Development

Work Plan Approval

This document outlines the work plan that will be followed for SHSP development. Approval of the work plan by Mn/DOT management's Transportation Program Committee (TPC) is an early step in the process.

Given SAFETEA-LU requirements, the SHSP development is on a very compressed timeline. However, Minnesota is well ahead of many states given that we already have the CHSP as the starting point.

Below, key milestones for plan development are identified and major steps in the process are described. Planned outreach efforts are also summarized.

Plan Initiation

The scope of the SHSP includes all roads in the State of Minnesota. Fatalities and life changing crashes are not restricted to State roads. In fact, around half of all fatalities occur on local roads. The SHSP will encompass all jurisdictions, and it is important that outreach during plan development ensures that key internal and external transportation partners and stakeholders are aware of the SHSP plan development effort, have opportunity to provide input on safety issues and approaches, and that they have opportunity to review and comment on the draft plan.

OTSO has already completed initial discussions about the CHSP safety strategies and SHSP development with many key stakeholders. The August 2006 annual Minnesota MPO Directors' Workshop included a presentation about the SHSP paired with a day-long training about safety conscious planning. Similarly, the 2006 Tribes and Transportation Conference was focused on safety, incorporating discussion of the SHSP. OTSO has completed SHSP overviews with many, many other stakeholder groups, including City and County Engineers, the interagency Partnership for Transportation Safety, and many others. These meetings have provided an introduction to SHSP philosophy, strategies, priorities, and have provided OTSO staff with an opportunity to hear the reaction and thoughts of our transportation partners.

As this SHSP update now begins in earnest, OTSO will reach out to stakeholders through many different approaches:

- Email distribution of this work plan and timeline to key stakeholders
- Newline article about SHSP development
- SHSP website
- Participation in scheduled meetings or video conferences of key internal and external stakeholders, including the January 2 Mn/DOT Planners' Video Conference, the quarterly meeting of the Mn/DOT Safety Committee on January 16, the January 26 meeting of the MPO Directors, the annual meeting of City/County Engineers in late January, District Operations video conference on February 9, the mid-February meeting of RDC transportation planners, the Advocacy Council on Tribal Transportation in March, etc.

Analysis and Plan Development

OTSO has hired a consultant to update the plan. Because we are updating the CHSP rather than starting from scratch, the consultant's first responsibility will be to meet with Mn/DOT, the Minnesota Department of Public Safety and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to discuss and identify necessary updates and revisions to the CHSP in order to meet current Federal guidance for SHSPs.

The CHSP was developed as a joint effort with Minnesota's Department of Public Safety. For the SHSP, a small inter-agency technical advisory committee will help to steer plan development and to ensure that key partners remain involved in shaping SHSP strategies and planning for implementation.

The major work element of SHSP development will be to update the analysis for the plan so that it utilizes the most recent crash statistics available. This data will be reviewed to determine whether any adjustments in strategies or priorities are suggested.

There are two new SAFETEA-LU requirements that will be addressed in the SHSP: a) a section that identifies the process for developing strategies to address the most hazardous 5% of roads; and b) a section that identifies the process for identifying High Priority Rural Roads.

In the interim following CHSP development, two specialized safety-related plans were developed by various Mn/DOT offices. The SHSP will incorporate appropriate elements of the Heavy Vehicle Safety Plan and the ITS Safety Plan.

A draft of the SHSP is expected to be ready for TPC approval for its release for public review by mid-March.

Review of Draft SHSP

The project manager for Mn/DOT (State Traffic Safety Engineer) will insure that the review process meets Mn/DOT's requirements for Plan Development and Approval and that an outreach effort provides opportunities for external and internal partners and the general public to provide input during development of the SHSP and to review and comment on the plan. At least a 30-day comment period is planned for review of the draft SHSP.

In addition to distribution to stakeholders and interested parties, the draft plan will be available on the SHSP website. OTSO will also arrange for formal opportunities for public comment. Comments received during those meetings, or in writing, by phone contact, or comments submitted electronically will all be summarized. Common themes will be identified. A summary of comments received and responses (as appropriate) will be prepared. TPC will be briefed if changes in strategies or priorities are proposed in response to comments.

Final SHSP

Any corrections or revisions based on comments will be made prior to final approval of the SHSP by TPC and adoption of the plan by the Commissioner of Transportation, the Governor's designee for this action.

Milestones

The table attached to this memo lists the key milestones and major actions needed for internal and external outreach.

Implementation

The SHSP will be completed by the summer of 2007. The most significant section of the plan is its implementation strategies. The SHSP will provide criteria that will assist

Mn/DOT districts and local government partners to identify priority, cost-effective implementation approaches to address proactive and corrective safety needs. The SHSP will establish safety-related performance objectives that can be monitored to track implementation of recommended, priority safety investments.