MISSISSIPPI
STRATEGIC HIGHWAY SAFETY PLAN

THE VISION: TOWARD ZERO DEATHS

2024

LEADERSHIP TEAM REFLECTIONS

All of us recognize the importance of improving safety on Mississippi's roads. We know what's at stake – saving lives.

With that in mind, highway safety leaders have all converged to offer both a direction and our support for Mississippi's 2024 Strategic Highway Safety Plan update. Throughout the years, this plan has paved the way for work that helped us address the deaths and serious injuries that result from vehicle crashes.

We also know we need to stay on course, we need to keep going, we can not stop now. People are still dying or are seriously injured as a result of crashes on Mississippi roads.

In 2022, Mississippi reported 703* deaths related to vehicle crashes. The national Toward Zero Deaths (TZD) sets an ambitious target. As a state that endorses TZD, Mississippi's vision calls for zero vehicle-related deaths. Our vision challenges us to continue the work, and our 2024 goal supports that challenge.

Where do we go from here? As members of the plan's Vision Team, we remain committed to leading the way in taking the next steps to implement the plan's strategies. Thanks to the dedicated professionals, community members, and safety experts who contributed to this plan's development, we have a path to progress.

As leaders of organizations and agencies that take safety to heart, we appreciate the insights that this plan offers, and we are ready and eager to move forward.

From this process, we learned the importance of strengthening our safety community. Participants at the 2023 Safety Summit told us they find value in coming together to share perspectives, to gain knowledge about the work of others, and, most importantly, to find ways to collaborate.

We look forward to organizing more formal opportunities for the safety community to meet regularly. Those conversations, interactions, and bonds help forge the partnerships and fuel the energy to bring the plan's strategies to life.

We want to express our deep appreciation for everyone – whether a member of the safety community or the public – who joins us in pursuit of this vision.

*703 deaths as of October 6, 2023. Crash deaths are subject to change with changes to the Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) database.

VISION TEAM PARTNERING AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

- Federal Highway Administration – Mississippi Division
- Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration – Mississippi Division
- Mississippi Association of Chiefs of Police
- Mississippi Association of County Engineers
- Mississippi Association of Road Managers
- Mississippi Department of Health
- Mississippi Department of Public Safety
    - Mississippi Highway Patrol
    - Mississippi Highway Patrol – Motor Carrier Safety Division
    - Mississippi Office of Highway Safety
    - Commercial Transportation Enforcement Division

- Mississippi Department of Transportation
- Mississippi Office of State Aid Road Construction
- Mississippi Sheriff's Association
- Mississippi Office of the Attorney General
- National Highway Traffic Safety Administration – Region 6

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APPENDIX

MISSISSIPPI 2024 SHSP HIGHLIGHTS AT-A-GLANCE

VISION: 0 TRAFFIC-RELATED DEATHS

UPS & DOWNS → Five-year statistics: Traffic-related deaths

663	642	748	772	703	0
2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2050

SHSP DEVELOPMENT

THE VISION
Sets the desired future state of road safety that all work toward

THE GOAL
Sets an interim target for improvement

BEST PRACTICES
Ideas with proven track records

DATA ANALYSIS
Identifies areas for improvement

OUTREACH
Builds the foundation for implementation

SAFETY OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES
Opportunities for maximum impact

NEXT STEPS
Outlines a path forward

INVOLVEMENT OF MANY

LEADERS
a small, selective group of state agency and organizational leaders

DRIVERS
a diverse group of partners across multiple agencies and organizations who steered the SHSP process

PARTNERS
a broader group of SHSP stakeholders from throughout the state and from a wide variety of organizations

SAFETY SUMMIT SPOTLIGHT

68 participants from **30** agencies and organizations participated in the Safety Summit

3Cs: SAFETY SUMMIT OUTCOMES

CONTRIBUTIONS
- Identifying and reacting to potential safety strategies
- Sharing ideas for implementation
- Engaging in enlightening discussions
- Learning from one another and sharing safety challenges

CONSIDERATIONS
- Including proven safety strategies in the SHSP
- Examining policy changes and legislative initiatives that strengthen safety practices and programming
- Expressing the desire for more opportunities to meet

CONNECTIONS
- Encouraging networking among participants with different expertise through coordinated seating assignments and small group activities
- Continuing to build the Mississippi safety community
- Planting the seeds for future collaborations among disciplines

DIRECTION BASED ON THE DATA

5 EMPHASIS AREAS

The 2024 SHSP focuses on five of the most prevalent emphasis areas that contribute to deaths and suspected serious injuries (referred to as 'serious injury' or 'serious injuries' throughout the plan).

These emphasis areas account for 91.8% of all fatal and serious injury crashes in Mississippi during the data analysis period.

Unbelted Occupants
58%

Lane Departures
53%

Impaired Driving
19%

Intersections
30%

Young Drivers
19%

PATH FORWARD

19 OBJECTIVES

These objectives are included in the 2024 SHSP to address traffic fatalities and serious injuries.

1. Strengthen enforcement to maximize safety belt use and its life-saving benefits
2. Strengthen public acceptance and community reinforcement of safety belt use
3. Improve road design to reduce the risk of lane departure crashes
4. Address curve-related lane departure crashes
5. Address speed-related lane departure crashes
6. Use enforcement to increase compliance for safe driving
7. Use intersection design to reduce the risk of crashes
8. Use enforcement to increase compliance for safe driving
9. Strengthen novice driver safety through adopting phased safety provisions as younger drivers gain driving experience and skill
10. Strengthen accessibility to driver education classes during the novice driver's learning permit phase
11. Strengthen traffic safety culture and its enforcement to improve driver safety
12. Strengthen impaired and drugged driving laws to deter driving impaired
13. Strengthen enforcement to promote DUI deterrence, detection, and arrest
14. Strengthen penalties/sanctions and monitoring of substance-involved offenders
15. Reduce excessive and underage drinking
16. Identify champions and promote policy changes within the Mississippi legislature
17. Explore processes and collaboration ideas to make traffic safety efforts more effective
18. Identify older drivers for increased risk of crash and strengthen licensing practices to extend driving while enhancing safety
19. Equip older drivers to plan for and adopt safe driving practices

SPECIAL RULES

Focus on high-risk rural roads, older drivers and older pedestrians, and vulnerable road users

EVERYONE HAS A SHINING ROLE IN TRAFFIC SAFETY CULTURE

A constellation of traffic safety culture stars.

By working together, Mississippi's traffic safety culture stars can move the state closer to the vision of ZERO traffic deaths.

Policy makers

Educators

Law enforcement officers

Business leaders

Other influencers

Agency leaders and staff

Planners and engineers

Judges, lawyers, court officials

Drivers

Emergency responders

NEXT STEPS

Leadership for implementation
Continued support to pursue new approaches

Growth of the safety network
Encourage and strengthen partnerships

Strategic funding support
Use SHSP as a guide for safety investments

Alignment with plans
Incorporate SHSP outcomes in related traffic safety plans

New emphases
Continue to build a traffic safety culture mindset

Integrate a Safe System approach to designing a road system with redundancies that factor in human mistakes and human vulnerabilities to protect road users

COMMITMENT TO A LIFE-SAVING CAUSE

1 person dies
every **12** hours
on Mississippi roads

1 person is seriously
injured every **2.5** hours
on Mississippi roads

A teenager with her younger sister in the passenger seat speeds to a family gathering, loses control, and rolls the car over. An impaired driver pauses to drink beer, leaves the road, and crashes into a tree. Another driver chooses not to wear a seat belt and hits a car at an intersection.

In these cases, drivers and passengers represent the faces and lives behind those numbers.

The statistics alone are sobering. *On average, two people die every day on Mississippi roads.* More than nine additional people suffer serious injuries daily from vehicle crashes. In Mississippi, 4,126 people died or suffered serious injuries from vehicle crashes in 2022 alone.

When it comes to the number of deaths and serious injuries that result from vehicle crashes, what is the number that is acceptable to everyone? **Zero.**

A national strategy for highway safety, Toward Zero Deaths (TZD) advocates for eliminating deaths and serious injuries on the nation's roads. This plan outlines how Mississippi will reach zero by 2050 using the TZD strategy, which calls for stakeholders to work together and champion the aim of reducing road deaths to zero. Mississippi has adopted the TZD strategy with all its inherent challenges.

Why?

Because it represents Mississippi's commitment to preventing crashes that result in the loss of lives and serious injuries. That commitment is apparent among the many contributors to the Mississippi SHSP. The people who worked on this plan – from the Working Group to executive leadership on the Vision Team – are Mississippians too. And nothing is more important to us than getting our fellow Mississippians home safely every day.

MISSISSIPPI'S JOURNEY

Throughout the years, Mississippi has worked to reduce crash-related deaths and serious injuries, with successes along the way.

Consider that in 2005, Mississippi reported 931 deaths resulting from vehicle crashes, compared to 582 in 2012, the lowest number in the state in 36 years.

By 2015, consistent with national statistics, those numbers began to rise in Mississippi with 677 crash-related deaths that year. During the height of the pandemic, they reached 748 in 2020 and 772 in 2021.

In 2022, 703 people died on Mississippi roads.

The total number of fatal and suspected serious injury (referred to as "serious injury" or "serious injuries" throughout the plan) crashes in recent years also follows a similar pattern with numbers peaking in 2020 and gradually declining in 2021 and 2022.

MISSISSIPPI TRAFFIC DEATHS AND SERIOUS INJURIES*
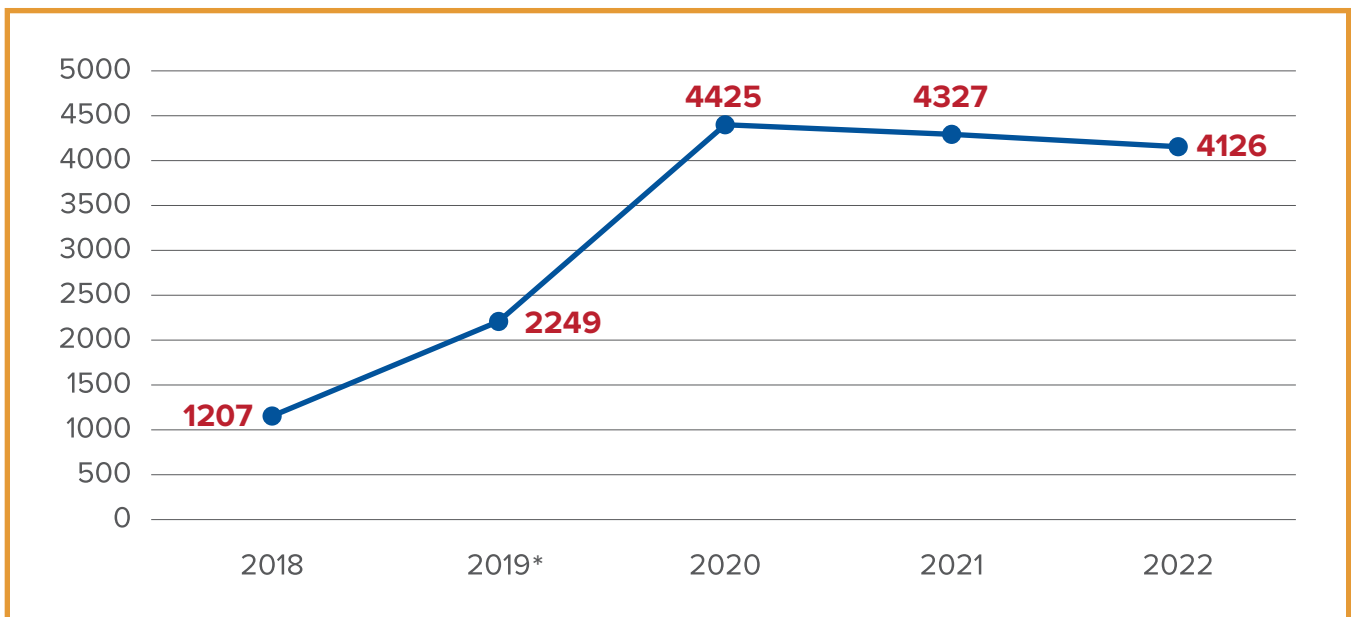
The numbers highlight the potential that exists for reducing deaths and serious injuries on Mississippi roads. They also reinforce the need to make smart, strategic investments in best practices that show measurable results and to expand partnerships that help move the most promising safety initiatives forward.

*In 2019, Mississippi adopted a new Model Minimum Uniform Crash Criteria (MMUCC)-compliant and more encompassing definition for serious injury crash reporting, which law enforcement officers now use. In 2020, the reporting of such crashes increased by 130 percent, which relates to the definition change.

VISION FOR SAFER ROADS

Mississippi's vision – its commitment to TZD – is clear: A highway system free of deaths through a sustained decline in transportation-related deaths and injuries.

While the pursuit of this TZD vision may seem almost impossible, the vision itself represents a strong, motivating call to action, not only for those whose job involves traffic safety, but for everyone.

The vision – and the work to achieve it – will also reap other benefits. Efforts to eliminate deaths and serious injury crashes will help reduce less serious, but still costly and harmful, crashes.

LET'S GO!
WHERE WE ARE GOING   WHAT IT MEANS

Increasing collaborations	More partnerships to launch safety initiatives
Identifying promising short-term actions	Immediate positive impacts
Using data to focus efforts	More effective use of resources
Taking a closer look at policies	Support for proven safety strategies
Turning strategies into actions	Results that make a difference
Setting the goal and measuring progress	Clear direction

⭐ IMPORTANT ROADMAP

The Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) outlines the framework for change and helps strengthen collaboration among Mississippi's safety community. Its components offer perspective on where the state stands in its pursuit of its TZD vision and identify objectives and strategies that support future success. The 2024 Mississippi SHSP includes:

- The SHSP vision
- The goal for reducing crashes that result in deaths and serious injuries
- Data analysis that sharpens the focus on areas for improvement
- Diverse safety stakeholder involvement to foster ideas and ongoing coordination
- Objectives and proven safety strategies to reduce deaths and serious injuries

Mississippi's approach to continuous safety improvements has opened opportunities for involvement and partnerships among **the "Four Es" of traffic safety**:

EDUCATION:
Those who support, develop, and execute safety education programs.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES:
Those who respond to roadside crashes, provide emergency medical services, and work to improve emergency medical response and transport.

ENFORCEMENT:
Those who enforce traffic safety laws and collect crash data.

ENGINEERNG:
Those who analyze crash data and identify, recommend, and implement solutions that improve the safety performance of the transportation infrastructure.

THE START

In 2005, Congress passed the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users, which set the SHSP as a requirement to receive federal transportation funding.

NOW

A core federal aid program, the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) funds efforts that reduce traffic deaths and serious injuries on all public roads, including non-state-owned roads and tribal roads. The federal HSIP requires a data-driven, strategic approach to improving highway safety, and the Mississippi SHSP defines this strategic direction through safety goals, clear objectives, and supporting safety strategies.

TRAFFIC SAFETY CULTURE
THE BIG PICTURE VIEW

In the annual AAA Traffic Safety Culture Index Survey, drivers strongly object to certain high-risk behaviors, such as texting while driving, yet nearly half admit that they engage in those behaviors.

Complacency toward risk-taking behavior by drivers and a tolerance for traffic crashes only increase the chances for crashes that result in deaths and serious injuries. While part of the solution, engineering improvements alone will only go so far in reducing fatal and serious injury crashes. Driver behavior makes a significant contribution, and creating a positive traffic safety culture can help in shifting risky driver behavior that leads to crashes.

Traffic safety culture explores how social factors in a community's culture influence how people prioritize and accept traffic safety strategies. It considers both the behavior of motorists and the broader social context that shape motorists' perceptions and behavior.

SHSP implementation will help shift the perceived social acceptance of high-risk behaviors to one that peers perceive as unacceptable, as well as help increase perceived social pressure to comply with traffic safety laws and practices.

The objectives and strategies of the Mississippi SHSP address the importance of driver behavior and the benefits of building a traffic safety culture. They do so, in part, by incorporating the following factors:

- Understanding of perceived driving expectations and ways to close the gap between actual versus desired attitudes and behaviors
- Crash data analysis to determine the extent and characteristics of risky driving behavior
- The importance of swift consequences for risky behaviors and the engagement of community members and law enforcement in supporting those consequences
- Ongoing education that aligns with statewide messaging and outreach
- Involvement of leaders, partners, and champions in directing and coordinating efforts, plus commitment from key state agencies, local law enforcement and health agencies, and private sector organizations

TRAFFIC SAFETY CULTURE STAR DRIVERS

By following the basics — staying within speed limits, buckling up, paying full attention when driving, never driving while impaired — and encouraging others to do so, you make a difference.

TRAFFIC SAFETY CULTURE

WHAT CAN YOU DO

As it turns out, you already may contribute to safer roads in ways you have not considered. Do you stay within speed limits? Do you arrange a ride for a friend who has been drinking at a party? Do you make sure to remind your teen to not text while driving? Do you always wear your seatbelt?

Through these and many other actions, you help promote a traffic safety culture that leads to decreases in crashes that result in deaths and serious injuries. How does even the smallest of efforts translate into some of the biggest gains in traffic safety?

Social norms, or the informal rules that motivate people to act in groups and societies, can create a culture that either reinforces or discourages unsafe driving conditions.

Social norms apply to you, an individual, and the relationships with others in your life, as well as to your community – your schools, churches, workplaces, and neighborhoods – and to society, including government priorities and policies.

As a driver, you can influence social norms with your behavior. Since 93 percent of all crashes are due in part to driver error, risk-taking, and/or lapses in attention, reducing those actions can go a long way to influencing those around you.

You are also not alone. *Everyone has a role when it comes to shaping a traffic safety culture that supports behaviors to reduce traffic-related deaths and serious injuries.* Working together, family members, employers, co-workers, peers, teachers, neighbors, legislators, and the many safety community members can impact the implicit or unspoken shared values, beliefs, and perceptions that shape safe driver behavior.

DATA-DRIVEN, HUMAN-CENTERED PLANNING

What makes a planning process one of the important drivers for safer roads in Mississippi?

A thoughtful and thorough SHSP planning process delivers three pillars – the foundation for real change that makes a difference in saving lives:

- Data for a better understanding of what stands in the way of safer roads

- Engagement of diverse stakeholder groups, the engines of change

- Proven safety strategies that are tailored to address Mississippi's key road safety issues

Those pillars set the stage for Mississippi to move forward with focused actions to reduce death and serious injury crashes and overall improve road safety.

VALUABLE DATA

Developing an SHSP involves both data-driven and human-centered approaches. Data analysis identifies crash locations, quantifies possible causes, and helps in determining infrastructure improvements and other measures that can help reduce deaths and serious injuries on public roads. Data plays a key role in the selection of areas with the greatest potential for safety improvement – known as emphasis areas – and the development of objectives and strategies with the greatest potential for making a difference.

For example, SHSP data helped identify rural roads as potential areas for safety improvements, and the SHSP objectives and strategies outline options for making those improvements.

SUPPORT FOR A STRONGER SAFETY NETWORK

Achieving reductions in deaths and serious injuries requires stakeholders from all disciplines to coordinate and leverage efforts into a comprehensive approach that supports a common vision. The SHSP planning process relies on bringing together stakeholders from the many areas that impact traffic safety:

- Representatives from federal, state, county, city, and tribal agencies and organizations that reflect the "Four Es": education, emergency medical services, enforcement, and engineering
- Metropolitan Planning Organizations
- Planning and Development Districts
- Safety coalitions and advocates
- Private industries, particularly those that primarily depend on roads, such as the freight industry
- Academic groups, such as Local Technical Assistance Programs and transportation researchers
- Other partners in the safety community

Whether through formal gatherings, working sessions, or one-on-one discussions, stakeholder outreach activities help shape objectives and strategies and to build and strengthen the partnerships that support the SHSP's implementation.

As part of the 2024 Mississippi SHSP planning process, safety leadership gathered to set the vision and overall direction for the plan.

The project Working Group, with representation from key agencies and organizations, met regularly to help guide the plan development. And, at this year's Mississippi Safety Summit, stakeholders from throughout the state – including a diverse group of agencies and organizations – reviewed data and shared their thoughts on solutions and next steps.

The SHSP process plays an important role in growing Mississippi's safety network. The network relies on people with expertise from many disciplines and backgrounds who, when joining forces, can turn SHSP objectives and strategies into actions. By setting a vision to unite the network and organizing opportunities for them to connect, the SHSP process helps build a firmer foundation for a stronger safety network.

SAFETY COMMUNITY GATHERING

THE BEST FROM PEER STATES

Peer reviews help capture ideas and successful best practices from other similar states. As another part of the planning process, Mississippi tapped five states to learn more about what worked well for them. The Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT) looked for states with similar populations, geography, and rural areas. MDOT also wanted states with recently updated SHSPs and/or a network of rural four-lane highways and selected Florida, Iowa, Louisiana, Minnesota, and Missouri.

The peer review highlighted potential practices and ideas for the SHSP update process, additional engagement and communication, emphasis area selection and crash data presentation, strategy development, SHSP report style, and implementation and evaluation.

STEPS FORWARD:
MISSISSIPPI SHSP DEVELOPMENT

THE VISION
Sets the desired future state of road safety that all work toward

THE GOAL
Sets an interim target for improvement

BEST PRACTICES
Ideas with proven track records

DATA ANALYSIS
Identifies areas for improvement

OUTREACH
Builds the foundation for implementation

SAFETY OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES
Opportunities for maximum impact

NEXT STEPS
Outlines a path forward

The SHSP process plays an important role in growing Mississippi's safety network.

TRAFFIC SAFETY CULTURE STAR
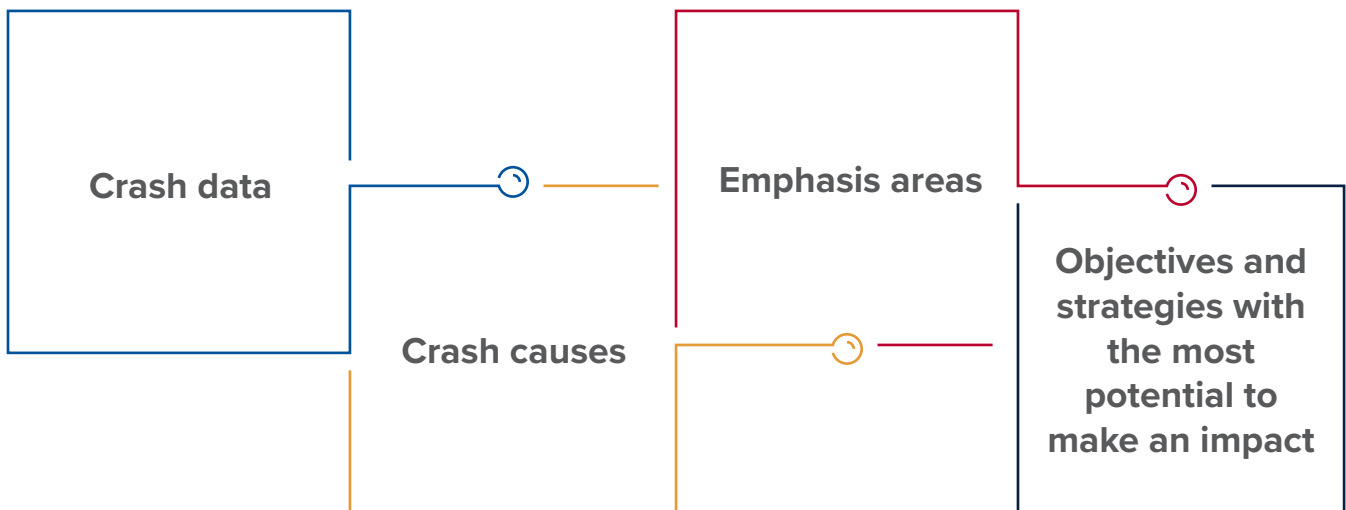## PLANNERS AND ENGINEERS
You help set a foundation for traffic safety by incorporating safety features into the planning of communities and designing of roads, as well as by exploring best practices and promising innovations.

KEY DATA POINTS

Data tells its own story. In Mississippi, the state's total crash deaths declined from 772 in 2021 to 703 in 2022 but remain slightly higher than pre-pandemic numbers. Serious injuries declined slightly from 3,663 in 2020 to 3,423 in 2022.

Mississippi's SHSP data analysis leads to a better understanding of contributing factors for fatal and serious injury crashes and marks the starting point for identifying solutions that help reduce those numbers.

Crash data → **Crash causes** → **Emphasis areas** → **Objectives and strategies with the most potential to make an impact**

THE STARTING LINE: CRASH DATA

The Mississippi Safety Analysis Management System (SAMSv2) database provided crash data for the 2024 Mississippi SHSP. Organized at the person-level and at the crash-level, crash data only included fatal and serious injury crashes, which represent the highest impact for loss of life or serious injuries and associated societal costs.

Analysis of each crash resulted in the assignment of an emphasis area for the crash. Available crash data for each crash included crash type, vehicle type, driver age, driver actions, seat belt use, and non-motorist injury. Because several factors may contribute to any single crash, the analysis also involved considering overlapping reasons for the crashes. For example, the impaired driver in a serious injury crash also may be unbelted and run off the road.

The 2024 Mississippi SHSP data analysis covered three years from 2020 to 2022. Because Mississippi adopted a new Model Minimum Uniform Crash Criteria-compliant serious injury definition in fall 2019, analysts focused on the three-year period beginning with 2020. Data limitations also exist for some crash details, such as speeding and distracted driving. Because driver behaviors that contribute to crashes are not readily verifiable for law enforcement, the amount of severe speeding and distracted driving crashes are likely underreported.

MISSISSIPPI DEATHS AND SERIOUS INJURIES: NUMBERS AND EMPHASIS AREAS

EMPHASIS AREA		FATAL AND SERIOUS INJURIES (STATEWIDE ALL ROADS 2020-2022)	
		PERCENT	NUMBER
DRIVERS	Young driver involved (20 and under)[1]	19%	2441
	Unlicensed Driver Involved[1]	25%	3244
	Older Driver Involved (65 and older)[1]	16%	2090
	Aggressive Driver Involved and Speed Related[1]	16%	1993
	Impaired Driver Involved (drug and alcohol)[1]	19%	2463
	Inattentive, Distracted, Asleep Driver Involved[1]	6%	760
	Unbelted Occupants[2]	58%	7499
SPECIAL USERS	Pedestrians[2]	6%	772
	Bicyclists[2]	1%	130
VEHICLES	Motorcyclists[2]	6%	785
	Heavy Vehicle Involved Crashes[1]	8%	1063
HIGHWAYS	Train-Vehicle Crashes[1]	<1%	33
	Lane Departure Crashes[1]	53%	6759
	Intersection Crashes[1]	30%	3847
	Work Zone Crashes[1]	1%	125

Notes:
[1] Includes all persons killed or seriously injured in the crash.
[2] Includes only persons killed or seriously injured from the listed group.

DIRECTIONS BASED ON DATA: EMPHASIS AREAS

Based on the data analysis, the 2024 SHSP focuses on five of the most prevalent emphasis areas that contribute to fatal and serious injury crashes.

- Unbelted occupants: Occurs as a factor 58 percent of the time
- Lane departures: Occurs as a factor 53 percent of the time
- Intersections: Occurs as a factor 30 percent of the time
- Young drivers: Occurs as a factor 19 percent of the time
- Impaired driving: Occurs as a factor 19 percent of the time

CLARITY IN FOCUS

These emphasis areas account for **91.8%** of fatal and serious injury crashes in Mississippi during the data analysis period.

DID YOU KNOW?

IT'S MUCH SAFER TO WEAR A SEAT BELT!

You are 32 times more likely to die in a crash if you do not wear a seat belt compared to those who do, according to Mississippi's 2022 statistics.

You are 8 times more likely to have no injuries if you wear a seat belt compared to those who do not, based on data of all Mississippians involved in a fatal crash.
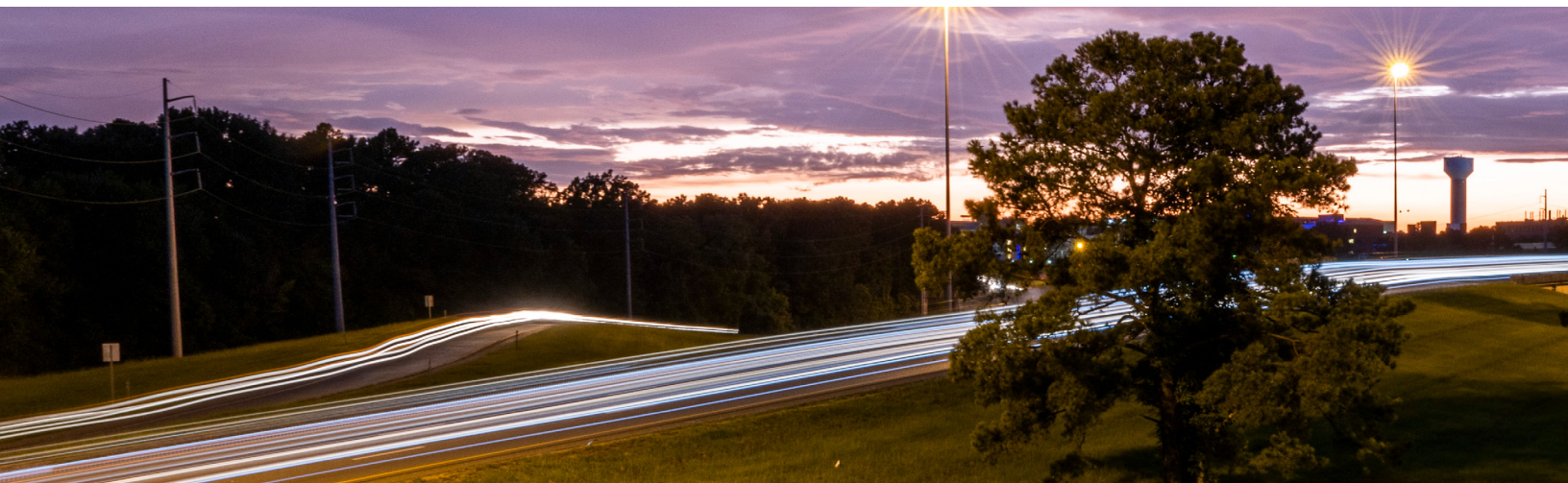
UNLICENSED DRIVERS

Unlicensed drivers also made up a high proportion of fatal and serious injury crashes statewide. According to research, though, more than one-third of all license suspensions relate to non-road safety reasons, such as failure to pay parking ticket fines, school truancy, or unpaid child support, and as many as 75 percent of those drivers continue to drive. License sanctions alone do not prevent unlicensed drivers from driving.

Mississippi SHSP safety strategies will help in reducing the high-risk road-related driving behaviors that often run parallel to driving unlicensed or with a revoked/suspended license. As a result, the SHSP does not list unlicensed drivers as an emphasis area, but instead includes strategies in related emphasis areas that also will support reducing the number of unlicensed drivers in the state.

EMPHASIS AREA OVERLAP

What percentage of lane departure crashes also involved aggressive driving? In what percentage of crashes were older drivers unbelted? In what percentage of crashes were younger drivers unbelted? Mississippi data analysis revealed the following answers:

- Of aggressive driving crashes, 70 percent involved lane departures.
- Of crashes among older drivers, 52 percent were unbelted.
- Of crashes among younger drivers, 51 percent were unbelted.

Crashes do not always fit into neat boxes. Further data analysis helps show the overlaps among emphasis areas, which paint a more complete picture of the contributing factors to fatal and serious injury crashes. Other overlaps of interest include:

- Of bicycle crashes, 29 percent occurred at intersections.
- Of crashes among older drivers, 41 percent occurred at intersections and 38 percent involved lane departures.

The 2024 Mississippi SHSP considered significant emphasis area overlaps in selecting the plan's objectives and strategies, which helps extend their potential impact to other emphasis areas.

DATA: SUPPORT FOR STRATEGIES

By leading to the identification of priority emphasis areas, the data analysis represents a critical step in the development of safety objectives and strategies. The data continues to be an asset in shaping and selecting road areas that can most benefit from engineering improvements. Targeting roads with the highest likelihood of fatal and serious injury crashes makes the most efficient use of limited resources.

The data also brings focus to the driver behaviors that contribute to deaths and serious injuries, such as impaired, distracted, and aggressive driving. Knowing the role of driver behavior in such crashes supports the development of objectives and strategies that help change that behavior and support a traffic safety culture.
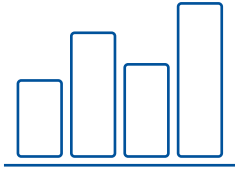
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TRAFFIC SAFETY CULTURE STAR
AGENCY LEADERS AND STAFF

As leaders and staff in a variety of state agencies, you focus on adopting proven ways to improve road safety, collaborating with partners to strengthen safety approaches, and committing resources to execute proven safety priorities.

TRAFFIC SAFETY CULTURE STAR
LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

Through your enforcement of traffic safety laws, your efforts to educate, your assistance and reports at the scene of crashes, and in many other ways, you are making Mississippi roads safer.

COLLABORATION TO SHAPE SOLUTIONS

With an understanding that effective transportation safety approaches require involvement from many disciplines, Mississippi designed a stakeholder engagement process for the 2024 SHSP that reached throughout the interdisciplinary "4Es" traffic safety community.

The process involved local, state, and federal agency-level transportation safety and planning professionals who work every day to improve Mississippi's traffic safety system, medical and health care representatives who provide critical care in the event of a crash, the academic community whose research helps shape new directions, and other organizations that support traffic safety initiatives.

The process also took a tiered and targeted approach to engaging stakeholders across the 4Es. This included involving three main groups:

LEADERS
a small, selective group of state agency and organizational leaders

DRIVERS
a diverse group of partners across multiple agencies and organizations who steered the SHSP process

PARTNERS
a broader group of SHSP stakeholders from throughout the state and from a wide variety of organizations

STRUCTURE FOR SUCCESS
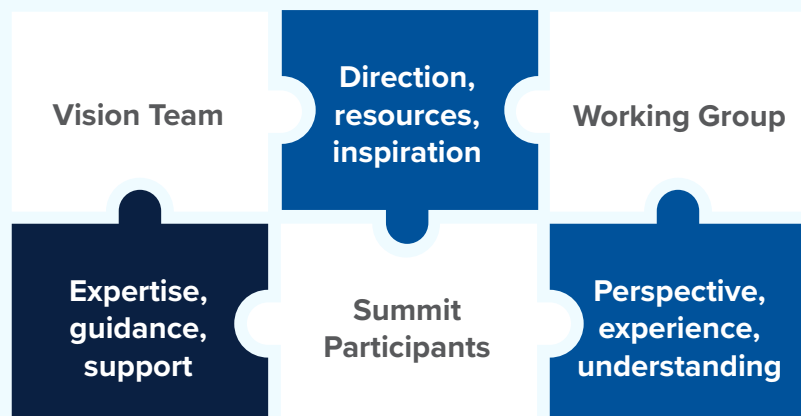
Vision Team

Direction, resources, inspiration

Working Group

Expertise, guidance, support

Summit Participants

Perspective, experience, understanding

> Mississippi designed a stakeholder engagement process for the 2024 SHSP that reached throughout the interdisciplinary "4Es" traffic safety community.

LEADERS: VISION TEAM

Leaders from the Mississippi Department of Transportation, Mississippi Department of Public Safety, Mississippi Highway Patrol, Mississippi Department of Health, Federal Highway Administration, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Mississippi Office of State Aid Road Construction, and Mississippi Association of Road Managers met to explore the issues, steps, and actions for the state's SHSP. This Vision Team provided the overall vision, direction, and leadership support for the SHSP and its implementation.

The Vision Team discussion led to the development of a Vision Team plan, which outlined activities and outreach to stakeholders, the process for identification and selection of objectives and tactics, and the posting of a public web page to share information about the SHSP update and key documents.

VISION SESSION THEMES

Importance of crash data to help identify safety emphasis areas

The value of driver behavior-change strategies, together with infrastructure strategies, in reducing severe crashes

The importance of legislation and laws supporting the SHSP goals and efforts

The desire to identify "low-hanging fruit" opportunities that can be implemented quickly

The benefits of increasing collaboration among safety leaders, agencies/organizations, and partners

DRIVERS: WORKING GROUP

The 2024 SHSP's Working Group consisted of leaders and subject matter experts whose efforts are critically important to the successful creation of an action-oriented SHSP that contains proven practices and aligns with Mississippi's vision.

The Working Group guided the SHSP's development throughout the planning process. The Mississippi Department of Transportation led the Working Group, and its members represented agencies and organizations that play a vital role in Mississippi's Toward Zero Deaths vision: Central Mississippi Planning & Development District, Gulf Regional Planning Commission, Federal Highway Administration, Mississippi Department of Transportation, Mississippi Department of Public Safety, Mississippi Highway Patrol, Office of Attorney General, and Sherman Police Department Law Enforcement Liaison.

At its meetings during 2023, the Working Group reviewed and discussed data highlights, recommendations from the SHSP peer review, and safety emphasis areas. Members also helped expand the stakeholder list by suggesting SHSP champions from their agencies and organizations, and their feedback contributed to the final list of objectives and strategies and the SHSP.

PARTNERS: SAFETY SUMMIT

In June 2023, the Safety Summit brought together 68 representatives from 30 agencies and organizations to review the data analysis, share ideas, and discuss strategies for reducing deaths and serious injuries in the state.

In smaller groups, they talked about SHSP implementation, younger and older driver safety, traffic safety policy, and traffic safety culture. They also considered the Safe System approach for urban and rural roads, which involves designing a road system with redundancies that factor in human mistakes and human vulnerabilities to protect road users, especially through safer roads and safer speeds.

In one session, representatives from the Mississippi Office of Highway Safety and Jackson State University shared insights on unbelted occupants and impaired driving among youth, spurring a discussion on ways to improve safety for all generations. In another session, a group talked about their organizations' approach to policy and standards implementation.

Participants in the Safety Summit also looked at two miles of an urban four- and five-lane road with a history of fatal and serious injury crashes, and they discussed how potential engineering solutions might help prevent future crashes. They considered the priority actions or strategies that could improve safety for younger and older drivers, as well as pedestrians and bicyclists.

Many such conversations took place during the SHSP Safety Summit. Those conversations contributed to possible infrastructure solutions for making Mississippi intersections, curves, and segments safer, ways to influence safe-driving behaviors, and potential strategies to make the state's roads safer for all.

SAFETY SUMMIT OUTCOMES

3Cs: SAFETY SUMMIT OUTCOMES

CONTRIBUTIONS

- Identifying and reacting to potential safety strategies
- Sharing ideas for implementation
- Engaging in enlightening discussions
- Learning from one another and sharing safety challenges

CONSIDERATIONS

- Including proven safety strategies in the SHSP
- Examining policy changes and legislative initiatives that strengthen safety practices and programming
- Expressing the desire for more opportunities to meet

CONNECTIONS

- Encouraging networking among participants with different expertise through coordinated seating assignments and small group activities
- Continuing to build the Mississippi safety community
- Planting the seeds for future collaborations among disciplines

A WIDE NET: SAFETY SUMMIT PARTICIPANT AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

- Batson & Brown (County Engineer for George and Jackson Counties)
- Calhoun County Sheriff's Office
- City of Amory
- DeSoto County
- Elliott & Britt Engineering (County Engineer for Lafayette, Marshall, and Tate Counties)
- Engineering Service (County Engineer for Rankin County)
- Federal Highway Administration – Mississippi Division
- Gulf Regional Planning Commission
- Hattiesburg-Petal-Forest-Lamar MPO
- Hinds County Sheriff's Office
- Lincoln County Sheriff's Office
- Jackson State University
- Mississippi Ambulance Alliance
- Mississippi Department of Education
- Mississippi Department of Public Safety
  - Mississippi Highway Patrol
  - Mississippi Highway Patrol – Motor Carrier Safety Division
  - Mississippi Office of Highway Safety
  - Commercial Transportation Enforcement Division

- Mississippi Department of Transportation
- Mississippi DUI Prevention Initiative
- Mississippi Hospital Association
- Mississippi Office of State Aid Road Construction
- Mississippi Sheriff's Association
- Mississippi State Department of Health
- Mississippi State University
- Mississippi Trucking Association
- Monroe County
- National Highway Traffic Safety Administration – Region 6
- Neshoba County Sheriff's Office
- Office of Attorney General
- Safe Kids Mississippi
- Simpson County Sheriff's Office

PARTNERS: OTHER OUTREACH ACTIVITY

In addition to the Vision Team, Working Group, and stakeholder Safety Summit, stakeholder engagement and collaboration also included focused discussions with safety leaders and subject matter experts, as well as a strategy session with Police Chiefs throughout Mississippi. These outreach activities aided in the development of safety objectives and safety strategies.

TRAFFIC SAFETY CULTURE STAR
EDUCATORS

Whether teaching traffic safety to youth or older adults, empowering family members to speak up for safety, developing public messages and reinforcing statewide enforcement waves, or sharing best practices with safety community members, you help change perceptions, which helps reinforce safety-conscious behaviors.

TRAFFIC SAFETY CULTURE STAR
EMERGENCY RESPONDERS

Whether emergency responders at the scene of a crash or health professionals who constantly look to improve the quality of care, you work to help crash victims, better understand injuries associated with crashes, and reduce the impact of crashes.

FOCUS ON IMPACT

Will adding rumble strips to roads help drivers stay in their lane and reduce the risk of a fatal or serious injury crash? Would adjustments to driver's license requirements for teens lessen factors that increase risk and the likelihood of a crash? What solutions best keep drivers and their passengers on Mississippi roads safer?

SHSP objectives and strategies form the basis for the actions to help reduce deaths and serious injury crashes in Mississippi. Since not all potential safety strategies deliver the same level of measurable effectiveness, the Mississippi SHSP process places an emphasis on proven safety strategies and emerging best practices to advance improvements in the emphasis areas that the data identified.

Participants at the Safety Summit, additional outreach to other stakeholders, and safety experts all contributed to a list of potential strategies. Those groups also helped to narrow the list to the following objectives and strategies with the greatest potential for impact in each of the emphasis areas.

The Mississippi SHSP process places an emphasis on proven safety strategies to advance improvements in the emphasis areas that the data identified.

EMPHASIS AREA: UNBELTED OCCUPANTS

What is the single most effective protective measure in the event of a crash? Buckling up with seat belts securely keeps occupants within the vehicle. *According to national statistics, the use of lap and shoulder seat belts together reduces the risk of fatal injury to front-seat passenger car occupants by 45 percent* and the risk of moderate-to-critical injury by 50 percent. In Mississippi, 78.9 percent of drivers and right-front-seat passengers buckled up; the remaining 21 percent, however, contribute to nearly 50 percent of Mississippi's fatal and serious injury crashes.

Data highlights show the impact on unbelted occupants and help focus objectives and strategies that encourage more Mississippi drivers to use seat belts.

THE NUMBERS*

Unbelted occupants occur as a factor in deaths and serious crashes 58% of the time.

UNBELTED DRIVERS INJURIES

55% occurred on high-speed roads, 8% higher than average

52% of older drivers were unbelted in fatal and serious injry crasheS

77% affected drivers

23% affected passengers

61% occurred on rural roads

40% occurred at night

OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES FOR UNBELTED OCCUPANTS

Objective: Strengthen enforcement to maximize safety belt use and its life-saving benefits

- Integrate seat belt and DUI high-visibility enforcement checkpoints and saturation patrols with emphasis on rural communities during nighttime hours when seatbelt use is lower, DWI is higher, and crash risk is greater

- Bolster Law Enforcement Liaison program to support and encourage local law enforcement participation in national traffic safety enforcement campaigns

- Strengthen penalties for lack of seat belt use including increased violation fines and/or progressive fines for repeat offenses coupled with public outreach to deter unbelted motorists

- Build political and community support for primary seat belt enforcement particularly for local law enforcement in rural communities

Includes drivers and passengers who received a fatal or serious injury and who were not wearing a restraint system.

Objective: Strengthen public acceptance and community reinforcement of safety belt use

- Strengthen focused communications and public outreach campaigns, coupled with enforcement, directed at low-seat belt-use or high-risk groups

- Promote peer-to-peer unbelted outreach programs that address social norms/shared expectations for seatbelts, particularly for low-seat belt-use groups

EMPHASIS AREA: LANE DEPARTURES

Lane departures involve vehicles that unintentionally leave the travel lane, either running off the road, or crossing the centerline or median. When combined with impaired driving, distracted driving, or speeding, or a combination of those factors, lane departures run the risk of turning deadly. To prevent lane departures, engineering and driver behavior strategies focus on keeping vehicles in their lane, helping the driver return safely to their lane, and/or minimizing the consequences if the vehicle crashes.

Data highlights reinforce the seriousness of lane departures and guide the lane departure objectives and strategies.

THE NUMBERS*

Lane departures occur as a factor in deaths and serious crashes 53% of the time.

26% **of lane departure serious injuries occurred on curves, 10% higher than average**

60% **of lane departure injuries occurred on high-speed roads, 13% higher than average**

14% **of injuries were speeding related, 5% higher than average**

38% **of crashes with older drivers involved lane departures**

20% **of lane departure crashes involved impaired drivers**

Fatal and serious injury crashes with crash type of run-off road, fixed object, head on, or sideswipe.

OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES FOR LANE DEPARTURES

Objective: Improve road design to reduce the risk of lane departure crashes

- Add pavement markings and rumble strips to keep drivers alert and reduce the risk of lane departure 🛞
    - Add pavement markings (centerline and edge line) where none currently exist or improve existing pavement markings. This may include using wider edge lines.
    - Install centerline and shoulder rumble strips and rumble stripes
    - Install centerline and shoulder audible stripe
    - Install shoulder audible stripe where shoulders may not be wide enough to accommodate a rumble strip or rumble stripe
- Improve the shoulder and clear zone to reduce the severity of crashes involving vehicles that leave the travel way 🛞
    - Provide wider shoulders with minimum 2-foot paved shoulders
    - Establish clear zone, including fixed object removal/shielding, foreslope/backslope corrections, and other measures to keep the clear zone traversable
    - Install high-tension cable barriers on divided roads, especially roads with narrow medians
- Install or improve lighting to increase driver visibility 🛞 🚶
- Improve the geometric design of the road to reduce the risk of lane departure crashes 🛞 🚶 🚴
    - Improve vertical and horizontal alignment in accordance with Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT) Roadway Design Manual
    - Improve sight distance in accordance with MDOT Roadway Design Manual
    - Separate non-motorized facilities from vehicle lanes
    - Convert 4-lane undivided road to 3-lane road with continuous 2-way left turn lane
    - Convert 5-lane with continuous 2-way left turn lane to a 4-lane divided road with a raised median
    - Install turn lanes or passing lanes where queue buildups occur

Objective: Address curve-related lane departure crashes

- Improve geometric design of curves to reduce the chances of a vehicle exiting the road 🛞 🚶
    - Improve superelevation or curve radius in accordance with MDOT Roadway Design Manual
    - Apply High-Friction Surface Treatment (HFST)
    - Add new advance warning signs or enhance existing advanced warning signs
    - Install chevrons, delineators, or dynamic flashing chevrons
    - Decrease spacing of Raised Pavement Markers (RPMs) to increase delineation and draw driver attention to curves

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Special Rules Legend:

🛞 High-Risk Rural Roads. Strategies that address rural two-lane roads with lane departure crash concerns or unsignalized intersection angle crash concerns.

🚶 Older driver or older pedestrian. Strategies that address older driver/pedestrians directly or indirectly by addressing road visibility (through lighting, markings, and signing) and skew.

🚴 Vulnerable road user (VRU). Strategies that address pedestrian or bicyclist crashes.

Objective: Address speed-related lane departure crashes

- Improve road design and signage to reduce speed-related lane departure crashes ⊙
  - Apply appropriate speed limits consistent with the road characteristics and surrounding land use
  - Reduce vehicle speeds via design
    - ◆ Reduce lane width of the slower sections of road
    - ◆ Speed humps or speed tables on urban roads
  - Install roundabouts or speed feedback signs near speed transition zones and targeted areas (such as schools and high-pedestrian areas)
  - Increase frequency of speed limit signs
  - Expand the urban-rural speed transition zone

Objective: Use enforcement to increase compliance for safe driving

- Improve enforcement along roads ⊙
  - Increase enforcement presence using expanded standard enforcement and high-visibility campaigns
    - ◆ Identify funding sources needed to increase enforcement presence
  - Work with lawmakers to implement laws to allow county sheriff deputies to use radar on county roads
  - Provide widened shoulders/pull-off sites at targeted locations for traffic enforcement and disabled vehicles
  - Work with lawmakers to implement laws to allow automated speed enforcement/speed safety cameras

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Special Rules Legend:

⊙ High-Risk Rural Roads. Strategies that address rural two-lane roads with lane departure crash concerns or unsignalized intersection angle crash concerns.

⊙ Older driver or older pedestrian. Strategies that address older driver/pedestrians directly or indirectly by addressing road visibility (through lighting, markings, and signing) and skew.

⊙ Vulnerable road user (VRU). Strategies that address pedestrian or bicyclist crashes.

EMPHASIS AREA: INTERSECTIONS

When two or more roads cross at intersections, vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists cross paths, which can result in many different crash types. Not all intersection crashes offer the potential for a fatal or serious injury crash. As a result, the strategies to prevent or minimize intersection crashes focus on reducing or eliminating the conflicts that most frequently contributed to severe crashes and consider all modes of travel, including pedestrians and bicyclists. Local context such as rural and urban setting should be considered when evaluating countermeasures to reduce crashes.

Data highlights look more closely at the details of intersection crashes, which help form the basis for proven safety strategies.

THE NUMBERS*

Fatal and serious injury crashes occur 30% of the time at intersections.

54% **occurred at two-lane intersections**

32% **occurred at four-lane intersections**

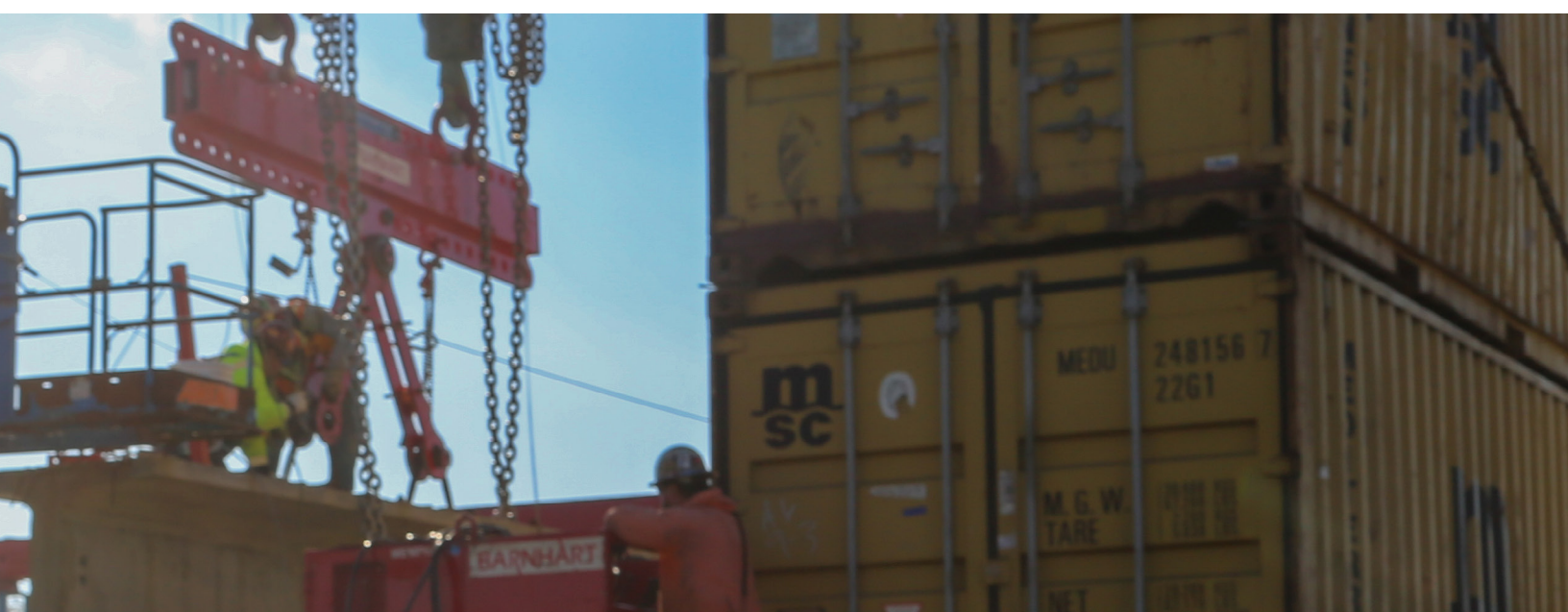**69%** **were crashes that occur at an angle**

13% **were rear-end crashes**

14% **of pedestrian crashes occurred at intersections**

41% **of crashes with older drivers were at intersections**

31% **of intersection crashes occurred at night**

Fatal and serious injury identified as an intersection crash in the crash report.

OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES
FOR INTERSECTIONS

Objective: Use intersection design to reduce the risk of crashes

- Use geometric design principles to reduce the number of severe crashes at intersections
  - Install roundabout
  - Install Restricted Crossing U-Turn (RCUT) or Median U-Turn (MUT) intersections on divided highways
  - Simplify complex intersections; reduce the number of access points; reduce the number of conflict points
  - Add turn lanes as appropriate
  - Clear sight triangles at intersections in accordance with MDOT Roadway Design Manual
  - Reduce intersection skew
  - Install median refuge islands for pedestrians
  - Restricted movement intersections, such right-in/right-out only
  - Remove channelized right turn lanes in urban areas
- Improve signalized intersections
  - Install retroreflective signal back plates
  - Provide increased walking time for areas with older pedestrians
  - Use a leading pedestrian interval
  - Use dynamic all-red extension (DARE) to detect red-light runners and extend red time to reduce red-light running crashes
- Use signs to improve intersection safety
  - Install high-visibility signs for older drivers
  - Install advanced access point signs
  - Install traffic approaching signs (flashing lights)
  - Add intersection warning signs or advanced signs
  - Add conflict warnings systems
  - Prohibit right turn on red
  - Install enhanced stop signs
  - City ordinances should be updated in relation to light-emitting diode (LED) signs
- Update pavement markings to reduce the risk of intersection crashes
  - Refresh striping and RPMs
  - Install transverse rumble strips on stop approach
  - Add appropriately placed stop bars at intersections

Special Rules Legend:

High-Risk Rural Roads. Strategies that address rural two-lane roads with lane departure crash concerns or unsignalized intersection angle crash concerns.

Older driver or older pedestrian. Strategies that address older driver/pedestrians directly or indirectly by addressing road visibility (through lighting, markings, and signing) and skew.

Vulnerable road user (VRU). Strategies that address pedestrian or bicyclist crashes.

- Apply access management principles as described in the Mississippi Access Management Guide to increase spacing between intersections and business access, limit the number of driveways located close to intersections, and reduce conflict points

- Prioritize pedestrian movements at intersections to limit vehicle/person collisions
  - Install sidewalks and crosswalks
  - Install appropriate lighting at crosswalks
  - Install rectangular rapid-flashing beacon (RRFB) or pedestrian hybrid beacon (PHB) at targeted locations
  - Increase the width of sidewalks
  - Add bike lanes
  - Reduce pedestrian crossing distance using curb extensions and road diets
  - Use leading pedestrian interval at signalized intersections

- Improve lighting to increase driver visibility

- Incorporate speed-reducing factors to reduce the severity of intersection crashes
  - Apply and sign appropriate speed limits
  - Use proven traffic calming techniques to reduce driver speeds
  - Install speed feedback devices
  - Speed reductions leading up to intersections
  - Install raised intersections

Objective: Use enforcement to increase compliance for safe driving

- Improve enforcement involvement to ensure road users follow the law

  - Increase enforcement presence
  - Use enforcement for traffic control during special events or for reoccurring events.
  - Increase stop sign enforcement
  - Work with lawmakers to implement laws to allow automated speed enforcement/speed safety cameras
  - Work with lawmakers to implement laws to allow automated red-light running enforcement
  - Use confirmation lights on signals that indicate red-light running to aid enforcement

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EMPHASIS AREA: YOUNG DRIVERS

Young drivers have crash rates nearly three times those of drivers ages 20 and older. Teen drivers often lack the judgment and driving skills that come with maturity and experience. They tend to overestimate their driving ability, underestimate the dangers on the road, and engage in high-risk behaviors—speeding, driving impaired, and not wearing a seat belt—increasing the risk of serious crashes. Strategies that focus on safety provisions while young drivers learn and gain experience help shape safe drivers for life.

Data highlights reveal more information about fatal and serious injury crashes among young drivers and support strategy development for younger drivers.

THE NUMBERS*

Young drivers were involved in fatal and serious crashes 19% of the time.

22% involved another person in the vehicle, age 11-30

65% of young drivers in fatal and serious crashes were unbelted

8% of young drivers in fatal and serious crashes were impaired

52% of crashes with young drivers involved lane departures

33% of crashes with young drivers occurred at intersections

44% of crashes with young drivers occurred at night

Fatal and serious injury crashes that included a driver 13-20 years old.

OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES FOR YOUNG DRIVERS

Objective: Strengthen novice driver safety through adopting phased safety provisions as younger drivers gain driving experience and skill

- Assess the benefits of reinstituting previously required driver's road test for novice drivers operating under a learner's permit to evaluate driving skills to obtain full unrestricted license
- Assess the benefits of Graduated Drivers' Licensing (GDL) passenger restrictions for drivers aged 17 and younger for the first six months of the provisional license
- For permit holders, incorporate a minimum of 10 hours of nighttime driving into the existing 50 hours of supervised driving

Objective: Strengthen accessibility to driver education classes during the novice driver's learning permit phase

- Identify funding for and require driver education classes throughout the state through public schools (especially rural schools), as well as through private providers for driving-age teens

Objective: Strengthen traffic safety culture and its enforcement to improve driver safety

- Increase safety education at schools and events to increase traffic safety culture of young drivers and adolescents, including increasing the awareness of the dangers of unbelted drivers and occupants, speed, impaired driving, and distracted driving
- Adopt hands-free cell phone use for all drivers and enhance to a criminal penalty
- Increase dedicated enforcement campaigns coupled with social norming media outreach focusing on unbelted, distracted, and impaired driving

EMPHASIS AREA: IMPAIRED DRIVING

Impaired driving results from the use of alcohol, illegal and prescription drugs, or a combination of alcohol and drugs. Posing a significant threat on Mississippi roads, impaired driving can distort a driver's senses, decrease reaction time, and hamper judgement, vision, and alertness. State and local law enforcement officials work throughout the year to detect impaired drivers and prevent them from continuing to drive while impaired. Despite such driving under the influence (DUI) safety measures, impaired driving remains a significant contributor to deaths and serious injuries on roads.

Data highlights show a link with risky behaviors, offering insights for strategies to help prevent impaired driving deaths and serious injuries.

THE NUMBERS*

Impaired driving occurs as a factor in fatal and serious injury crashes

19% **of the time**

65% **of impaired driving crashes involved lane departures**

64% **of crashes with impaired drivers occurred at night**

58% **of crashes with impaired drivers involved other risky behavior, such as speeding or riding in a vehicle without a seat belt**

Fatal and serious injury crashes that include a driver with alcohol or drug involvement.

OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES FOR IMPAIRED DRIVING

Objective: Strengthen impaired and drugged driving laws to deter driving impaired

- Enact enhanced sanctions for high BAC offenders including sanctions for first-time offenders with high BACs comparable to those for repeat offenders

- Promote officer awareness and consistent use of Mississippi's State Online Non-Adjudicated Registry or SONAR system to populate the Mississippi's DUI Confidential Registry to ensure law enforcement, prosecutors, judges, and court clerks have the information necessary to identify repeat DUI offenders

- Enact open container law prohibiting an open alcoholic beverage container and its consumption by motor vehicle drivers or passengers

Objective: Strengthen enforcement to promote DUI deterrence, detection, and arrest

- Advance oral fluid testing pilot program for law enforcement to be used as a roadside tool for probable cause to strengthen the detection of suspected drug-impaired drivers

- Require all agency law enforcement officers, in addition to Standard Field Sobriety Testing (SFST), to receive Advanced Roadside Impaired Driving Enforcement (ARIDE) training to meet the growing demand of drug-impaired driving detection and arrest

- Strengthen candidate pool of highly trained and qualified officers to serve as certified Drug Recognition Experts (DREs) and promote officer use of DREs to detect and apprehend substance-involved drivers with procedures that will increase the DUI conviction rate

- Integrate high-visibility impaired driving enforcement saturation patrols and checkpoints with other speed and unbelted enforcement campaigns to expand opportunities to detect and arrest DUI and drugged-impaired drivers

- Require all enforcement agencies' use of eCrash and eCite systems to enable more consistent and reliable agency reporting of DUI arrests and convictions reported to the MDPS Criminal Information Center (CIC) for more complete criminal history records

- Strengthen and expand enforcement use of passive alcohol sensors, particularly during checkpoints, to detect alcohol in ambient air to initiate a driving while intoxicated (DWI) investigation

Objective: Strengthen penalties/sanctions and monitoring of substance-involved offenders

- Require alcohol ignition interlocks as a condition for license reinstatement for BAC test failure including misdemeanor DUI first and second post-conviction as well as test refusal, and/or high BAC (.15 or higher) offenders prior to conviction

- Expand high-supervision DUI/Drug Courts for high-risk repeat offenders to be used as a post-conviction tool and not as a diversion program allowing the offender to bypass conviction

- Strengthen intensive supervision programs to closely monitor offenders to control convicted offenders and reduce recidivism

Objective: Reduce excessive and underage drinking

- Increase outreach programs to target substance abuse prevention in schools and communities

- Expand Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) in emergency departments, trauma centers, colleges, and social service settings

- Publicize and enforce underaged drinking law for drivers under age 21

- Conduct highly publicized compliance checks and server training for alcohol retailers and merchants to reduce sales to underage and over-served persons

- Conduct public outreach on accessible safe-ride alternative transportation services

POLICY

Traffic safety policies play a key role in protecting road users by setting the incentives and penalties that encourage safe driver behaviors and in helping bring many of the emphasis area objectives and strategies to fruition. The Mississippi SHSP includes the following objectives and strategies to increase the collaboration, communication, and coordination that strengthens policy development and ultimately enhances Mississippi's driver safety culture.

OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES FOR POLICY

Objective: Identify champions and promote policy changes within the Mississippi legislature

- Organize a Transportation Safety Capital Day to facilitate outreach to legislators
- Incorporate legislators and identify champions early in policy change
- Develop a traffic safety legislative group
- Use people affected by crashes to influence those who can implement change
- Conduct vision session to establish buy-in from agency leaders
- Work with prosecutors to assess the judicial process and outcomes for traffic safety offenders
- Work with lawmakers and law enforcement to strengthen the distracted driving law and make sure it is enforceable

Objective: Explore processes and collaboration ideas to make traffic safety efforts more effective

- Simple explanatory communication and documentation
  - Standardize road design regulations to make updated requirements easy to find and use
  - Improve knowledge-sharing to pass knowledge/experience from veteran staff to newer staff
- Improve stakeholder collaboration
  - More frequent stakeholder meetings
  - Incorporate regular safety discussions at annual/bi-annual professional association meetings (law enforcement, engineers, etc.) to improve peer-to-peer collaboration
  - Improve dynamics between veteran staff and new staff to get understanding between them and work better together
  - More participation from local law enforcement for enforcement activities
- Increase agency partnerships to support technology grants through data sharing

TRAFFIC SAFETY CULTURE STAR:
POLICY MAKERS

By carefully considering data and weighing feedback and safety partner recommendations, you craft legislation and regulations that offer incentives and establish consequences to promote a positive traffic safety culture.

TRAFFIC SAFETY CULTURE STAR:
JUDGES, LAWYERS, COURT OFFICIALS

Whether prosecuting offenders or imposing swift and certain penalties to deter illegal driver behaviors, you reinforce law enforcement's hard work to arrest offenders and help ensure that drivers take laws seriously.

CLOSER LOOK: SPECIAL RULES

Nationally, on average in 2021, a pedestrian was killed every 71 minutes and injured every nine minutes in traffic crashes, according to statistics from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). NHTSA reported that 7,388 pedestrians were killed in traffic crashes in 2021, the highest since 1981.

Pedestrians and bicyclists of all ages, drivers on rural roads, and older drivers often face risks that can result in fatal and serious injury crashes.

Because of those risks, the federal government requires states that complete an SHSP to conduct an analysis for three specific types of crashes:

- Crashes on high-risk rural roads
- Crashes that impact older drivers and older pedestrians
- Crashes that impact vulnerable road users, such as pedestrians and bicyclists

These analyses help identify crash trends for vulnerable populations and for vulnerable parts of the road network. When criteria are met and a special rule takes effect, the state must define SHSP strategies and implementation to help reduce fatal and serious injury crashes according to that special rule.

HIGH-RISK RURAL ROADS (HRRR)

The federal HRRR special rule applies when the death rate on the state's rural roads – including rural collectors and rural local roads – increases over the most recent two-year period. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) calculates death rates with data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) and with road data from the Highway Performance Monitoring System (HPMS).

FHWA's calculations for the 2024 SHSP did show an increase in deaths on Mississippi's rural roads, and historically, rural crashes have been prevalent in statewide data sets. Mississippi approaches solutions to HRRR in several ways.

The most common crash type for rural roads, lane departures, make up 63 percent of all rural fatal and serious injury crashes in Mississippi. Because both lane departure crashes and rural road crashes are usually overrepresented in Mississippi crash data, the state typically has HRRR-eligible roadways represented on its HSIP Project Plan whether it met for the special rule that year or not to ensure these critical areas are addressed statewide. The SHSP's emphasis areas, objectives, and strategies, especially for lane departure and intersections, also support the reduction of HRRR crashes.

MISSISSIPPI'S HRRR DEFINITION

The FHWA requires states to establish parameters for determining if the rural roads where crashes occur qualify as HRRR.

According to Highway Safety Improvement Programs legislation, the term "high risk rural road" means any road functionally classified as a rural major/minor collector or a rural local road with significant safety risks, as defined by a state in accordance with an updated state SHSP.

The Mississippi Department of Transportation defines "significant safety risk" as it pertains to HRRR as any road functionally classified as listed above and meeting any of the following criteria during the analysis period:

- One Fatal (K), One Suspected Serious Injury (SSI) Crash, or multiple risk factors present that can be associated with K or SSI crashes
- Lane departure crashes are the majority of crashes on the subject route
- Angle type crashes are the majority of crashes at the subject intersection

Mississippi approaches HRRR-related crash issues primarily through systemic, lane departure-focused objectives and strategies both on state highways and on local roads through MDOT's Safety Circuit Rider Program.

SHSP strategies for preventing fatal and serious crashes on HRRR appear in SHSP's objectives and strategies

OLDER DRIVERS AND OLDER PEDESTRIANS

The older drivers and pedestrians special rule applies when the death rate for drivers and pedestrians ages 65 or older increases over the most recent two-year period. Mississippi has experienced an increase in the death rate for this group. FHWA calculates death rates with data from FARS and HPMS.

The SHSP's emphasis areas, objectives, and strategies offer ways to improve safety for older drivers and pedestrians.

OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES OLDER DRIVERS AND OLDER PEDESTRIANS

Objective: Identify older drivers for increased risk of crash and strengthen licensing practices to extend driving while enhancing safety

- Develop and promote an accessible online mechanism for law enforcement officers, medical staff, family members, or friends to notify Department of Public Safety Driver Service Bureau licensing of at-risk drivers for an assessment of the driver's ability to safely drive

- Reinstitute road testing for at-risk older drivers demonstrating a potential decline in the ability to safely drive

- Review and confirm screening protocol and training for licensing personnel to effectively identify drivers demonstrating a decline in physical or cognitive functioning

- Examine procedures for assessing medical fitness to drive and ensure medical review practices align with Driver Fitness Medical Guidelines (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) & American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators (AAMVA)

- Assess older driver licensing approaches for drivers identified as higher risk to limit driving risks while supporting greater personal autonomy to drive. Licensing approaches to assess may include testing, license renewal (age and frequency, in-person), and limited licenses (e.g., geographic, road type, time of day)

Objective: Equip older drivers to plan for and adopt safe driving practices

- Establish a broad-based older driver coalition to assess and create a guide for addressing older adults' driving and transportation needs

- Establish an online "one-stop" resource to guide older drivers and their family/friends on navigating changing driving needs and available resources, such as: assessing driving capabilities and limitations, skill development; locating programs to enhance safety and comfort, available driving courses, alternative safe mobility options; and voluntarily limit driving to safe driving conditions

- Offer driver refresher course or an online resource for older drivers to learn about new infrastructure features (e.g., roundabouts), emerging safety issues (e.g., drug-impaired driving), vehicle safety technologies such as advanced driver assistance systems (ADAS), and in-vehicle technology distractions

Additional SHSP strategies that prevent fatal and serious injury crashes among drivers and pedestrians ages 65 or older also appear in SHSP's emphasis area objectives and strategies.

VULNERABLE ROAD USERS (VRU)

The VRU special rule applies when a state's total annual deaths of VRUs – bicyclists and pedestrians – represents 15 percent or more of the total annual crash deaths in the state. The percentage of VRU deaths are calculated with data from the FARS database.

The VRU special rule requires states to dedicate a percentage of funding to support safety improvements for VRU and a method to identify high-need locations, as well as calling for the SHSP to include emphasis areas, objectives, and strategies that help reduce VRU deaths.
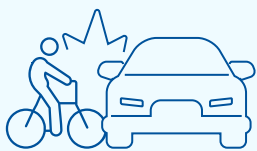
SHSP strategies for preventing fatal and serious injury crashes that involve VRUs appear in SHSP's objectives and strategies.
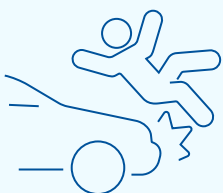
Drivers on rural roads, older drivers, pedestrians of all ages, and bicyclists may face risks that can result in fatal and serious injury crashes.

TRAFFIC SAFETY CULTURE STAR:
BUSINESS LEADERS

Through policies that encourage employees to follow safe driving behavior while on the job, through other incentives and consequences, and through advocacy efforts that reinforce the importance of traffic safety, you strengthen Mississippi's traffic safety culture.

TRAFFIC SAFETY CULTURE STAR:
OTHER INFLUENCERS

The very diverse safety community includes those who work in local government; in community organizations and associations; in treatment centers and probation offices; in transportation-related industries, such as freight; in vehicle-related industries, such as car manufacturing; in the technology sector and many other industries – you share a commitment to enhancing the traffic safety culture.

PATH TO PROGRESS

Mississippi's SHSP builds a strong foundation for implementation with actions that:

- Use data to focus attention on the emphasis areas that will make the most impact in preventing crash-related deaths and serious injuries
- Bring innovative and proven ideas and best practices for adoption
- Involve multidisciplinary stakeholders in shaping strategies and solutions, the same stakeholders who in turn work to bring strategies to life
- Support stronger partnerships among agencies and organizations that share responsibility for traffic safety
- Offer a framework for next steps

As Mississippi continues to do more of what works, eliminates what is less effective, and launches new proven initiatives in a proactive and collaborative manner that involves its broad network of safety partners, the state can collectively turn these strategies into action.

The objectives and strategies in the 2024 Mississippi SHSP offer numerous opportunities to reduce the number of deaths and serious injuries on Mississippi roads. While states take many paths to implementing their SHSPs, Mississippi will pursue the most practical and impactful one that leads to achieving its goal.

LEADERSHIP FOR IMPLEMENTATION

SHSP Vision Team leadership will provide ongoing support for implementation work by the represented agencies and organizations. This leadership encourages partnerships among safety community members to pursue new approaches and to collaborate to strengthen current efforts. With their knowledge and expertise, SHSP Working Group members can help introduce SHSP proven safety strategies.

GROWTH OF THE SAFETY NETWORK

The implementation path starts with some key steps: Exploring a structure that helps bring the traffic safety community together with greater frequency, further defining measurable outcomes for strategies and actions, and working with state and local agencies and safety partners on SHSP implementation. Mississippi's SHSP objectives and strategies help foster the kind of collaboration within the traffic safety community that makes Mississippi roads safer for all.

STRATEGIC FUNDING SUPPORT

The Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT) will continue using the SHSP as a guide in identifying safety improvement projects for federal HSIP funding. Those projects may include engineering solutions, behavioral safety solutions based on proven SHSP safety strategies, and other necessary projects for SHSP implementation. Likewise, the Mississippi Department of Public Safety (DPS) will consider investment opportunities to implement and/or partner on the implementation of SHSP behavior-related safety strategies.

ALIGNMENT WITH PLANS

The SHSP serves as an umbrella to a host of related transportation and safety plans, which were reviewed during the SHSP development process to confirm SHSP alignment. Those plans include Mississippi's Commercial Vehicle Safety Plan, the State Transportation Improvement Program, Mississippi's Unified Long-Range Transportation Infrastructure Plan, the Highway Safety Improvement Program, various Metropolitan Planning Organization plans, the Highway Safety Plan, and related behavioral strategic plans. Furthermore, Safety Summit invitees included representatives from federal, state, county, city, and tribal agencies, whose contributions led to the development of the SHSP's objectives and strategies, and their contributions helped align the SHSP with their agency's priorities.

MDOT and DPS will draw from the SHSP data, priorities, and strategies to continue aligning its related safety plans, including MDOT's Safety Education Program plans, with the SHSP as they are revised and updated. The state's metropolitan planning agencies, counties, and cities will consider the SHSP as they work on their plans and transportation programs. Aligning these plans helps Mississippi better leverage its funding and maximize its impact.

NEW EMPHASES

Mississippi recognizes the advantages of adopting a traffic safety culture mindset in all that it does to improve traffic safety. The SHSP objectives and strategies support an emphasis on traffic safety culture. In addition, the state looks to incorporate a Safe System approach as it considers improvements.

SAFE SYSTEM MODEL:
PART OF MISSISSIPPI'S PATH FORWARD

The U.S. Department of Transportation's current model to address road safety, Safe System, recognizes the importance of human mistakes and vulnerabilities when designing effective ways to reduce deaths and serious injuries. As a result, the Safe System approach builds and reinforces multiple layers of protection to prevent crashes from happening and to minimize harm when crashes do happen, and it incorporates the following principles:

Death and serious injuries are unacceptable: Places priority on the prevention of crashes that result in deaths and serious injuries.

Humans make mistakes: Acknowledges human mistakes can result in crashes and looks to design and operate a transportation system that prepares for those mistakes.

Humans are Vulnerable: Recognizes the physical limits of human bodies and develops strategies to protect humans from death and serious injury.

Responsibility is Shared: Requires all stakeholders and the public to work together in preventing deaths and serious injuries.

Safety is Proactive: Seeks to identify and address safety issues early rather than react to crashes.

Redundancy is Crucial: Strives to strengthen all parts of the transportation system, so if one part fails, the other parts still protect people.

Safe System objectives include safer drivers, safer vehicles, safer speeds, and improved post-crash care. As applicable, Mississippi's SHSP applies the Safe System principles and objectives in the development of its strategies.

As Mississippi optimizes strategies, discards inefficiencies, and engages in collaborative proactive efforts with safety partners, it can effectively implement proven initiatives.

MDOT
MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION