

# GREATER HELENA AREA TRANSPORTATION SAFETY PLAN

Volume 1

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## What is a Community Transportation Safety Plan?

A Community Transportation Safety Plan (CTSP) is a data-driven process of identifying the safety issues involved in Greater Helena Area crashes and then determining what strategies and activities are needed to reduce those crashes.

This planning process documents local safety problems, defines emphasis areas for focus in the plan, and identifies a comprehensive set of strategies and actions to address those problems.

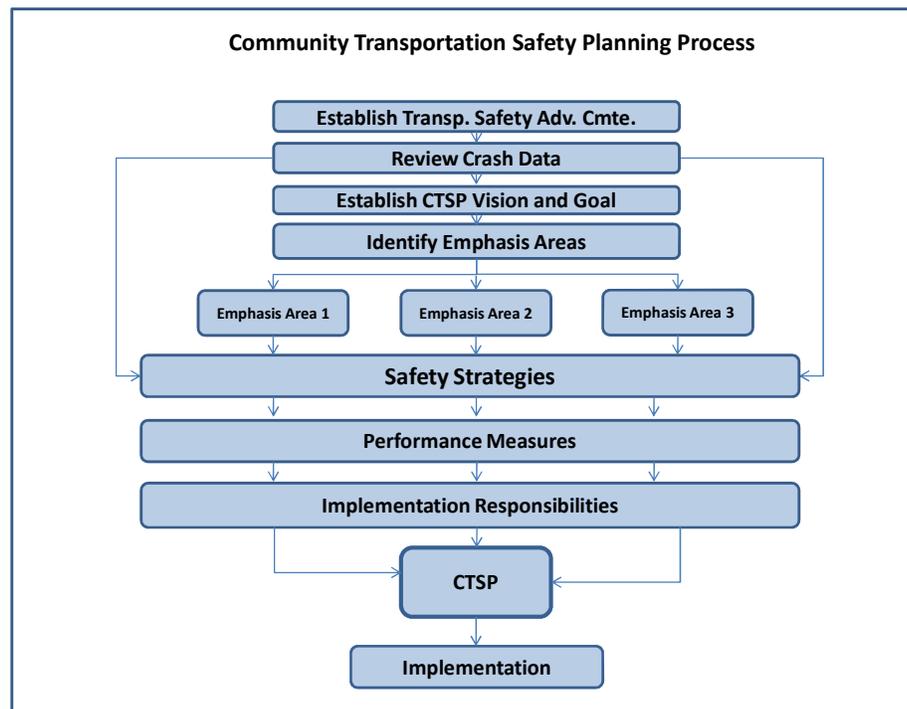
As part of the process, the plan will define specific action steps that Greater Helena Area community members can implement moving forward to increase transportation safety in the community and improve quality of life.

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### For more information:

Visit the MDT safety web site at:  
[www.mdt.mt.gov/safety/](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/safety/)



**Helena Plan Vision:**  
*The Greater Helena Area will have the safest motorized and non-motorized transportation system in Montana*



## Safety Planning Assistance

As an effort to reduce urban area crashes, the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) offers technical and financial transportation safety planning assistance to communities interested in developing a Community Transportation Safety Plan.

Working together, community safety partners can identify and address safety issues. The Plan will identify

specific activities to reduce the number of severe injury and fatal crashes within area communities.

MDT supports development of local safety plans so strategies and action steps are customized to local communities. These plans identify local partners, processes and resources unique to each community that can be leveraged to reduce crashes.

## Transportation Safety Advisory Committee

Development of the CTSP is led by a Transportation Safety Advisory Committee (TSAC). The TSAC is comprised of local safety stakeholders, each with an expertise partners guide the plan's development and implementation.

The proven way to improve transportation safety is to employ a multi-disciplinary approach, engaging representatives from the 4 Es of transportation safety – education, enforcement, engineering, and emergency response.

The TSAC held its first monthly Community Transportation Safety Plan development meeting on February 20. Attending the TSAC

meetings are community partners and stakeholders representing the 4 Es of transportation safety, including:

- Helena Police Department;
- Lewis and Clark Sheriff Office;
- Tri-County Buckle Up MT;
- Lewis and Clark County;
- Helena College-UM;
- Helena Public Works;
- Helena Non Motorized Travel Advisory Committee;
- Montana Department of Transportation; and
- Helena School Traffic Education.

## Safety Vision and Goal

When developing a strategic plan, it is important to define what the community wants to accomplish.

At the initial Transportation Safety Advisory Committee meeting, the group established the vision for the Helena Community Transportation Safety Plan as:

*The Greater Helena Area will have the safest motorized and non-motorized transportation system in Montana.*

This vision encompasses all modes of transportation and includes both residents of and visitors to Helena.

The community's long-term goal is zero fatalities; no one in Helena will die in a traffic crash.

A quantitative five-year target was established as:

*Reduce crashes by 25 percent between 2013 and 2018.*

## Crash Data

For every crash involving an injury or property damage over \$1,000, the responding law enforcement officer fills out a detailed crash report. The crash report capture details about the characteristics of the crash, including:

- Driver age;
- The type of crash (i.e., rear-end, sideswipe, collision with tree, etc.);
- Weather conditions;
- Crash location;
- Time of day and day of week;
- Safety belt use;
- Impairment (alcohol or drugs);
- Driver distraction; and
- Type of vehicle.

The CTSP process will use Greater Helena Area crash data trends to define the most significant safety issues in the community and help guide the development of customized strategies to improve transportation safety in the Greater Helena Area.



## Helena Safety Issues

In the Greater Helena Area, each year there are an average of 1,315 crashes. These crashes result in an average of 6 fatalities, 24 incapacitating injuries, and 367 non-severe injuries per year (Averages are from 2007 to 2011 data). Specific factors involved in injury crashes are noted below; more than one factor can be involved in each crash.

Of the 129 fatal and incapacitating injury crashes that occurred in greater Helena from 2007 to 2011, 54 (42 percent) occurred at an intersection or were intersection-related. The vast majority of intersection crashes occurred during clear weather; only 2 percent of severe intersection crashes occurred in snow and 2 percent during rain. 50 percent of severe-injury crashes occurred at a stop sign and 24 percent at a signal.

When considering non-motorized transportation, five percent of severe crashes (those resulting in a fatality or incapacitating injury) involved a bicyclist and 16 percent involved a pedestrian. 43 percent of severe pedestrian crashes were not at an intersection or crosswalk.

40 percent of severe crashes involved inattentive driving, which may include any behavior that results in a driver losing focus on the task of driving. This category does not include cell phone use. Nearly two-thirds of severe inattentive crashes involved male drivers. Most (89 percent) inattentive injury crashes involved multiple vehicles.

Among severe crashes where the vehicle ran off the road, 37 percent occurred between midnight and 5 a.m.

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*The plan will consider ways to increase the safety of both infrastructure and the behavior of transportation system users.*

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**Visit the Greater Helena Area Transportation Safety Plan web site:  
<http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/helena>**

## Next Steps in Development of the Greater Helena Area TSP

The process for development of the CTSP is expected to take approximately six to eight months. At upcoming meetings the TSAC will conduct the following activities:

- Define the emphasis areas that will form the basis of the plan. These will be based on crash data showing the most significant safety problems in the Greater Helena area.
- Identify current transportation safety activities in Helena. Determine which programs can be enhanced, and where there are gaps.
- Conduct a public Safety Summit to confirm emphasis areas, define safety strategies, and identify new partners for addressing the specific safety issues in the Greater Helena Area.
- Develop a draft plan, including strategies, action steps, and potential resources. The plan will include an implementation structure and recommended format for reporting annually to MDT on results.
- The final Greater Helena Area Transportation Safety Plan will be presented to the local governing body for adoption.

## How To Get Involved

Public involvement in the development and implementation of the Transportation Safety Plan is critical. The success of the Greater Helena Area TSP is dependent on the participation and support of the community and the TSAC.

Helena area residents can provide input into the plan in a number of ways:

- A web site has been established where meeting presentations and information will be posted <http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/helena>.
- Residents can submit comments directly to the local plan contact.
- Participate in the Community Safety Summit to be held on **May 21, 2013 at the Civic Center from 6 to 9 p.m.**



### Plan to Participate in the Helena Community Safety Summit

An important step in the development of the Greater Helena Area Transportation Safety Plan will be the Safety Summit, to be held the evening of Tuesday, **May 21, 2013**.

At the Summit community members will identify safety strategies, confirm emphasis areas, and identify new partners for addressing safety issues in Greater Helena Area.

Public participation and input is crucial. Check the plan website for additional information.

### *Local Plan Contact:*

**John Rundquist, P.E.  
Helena Public Works  
Director**

**406-447-8428**

**[jrundquist@ci.helena.mt.us](mailto:jrundquist@ci.helena.mt.us)**