

Comprehensive Traffic Safety Program



A comprehensive traffic safety program is called for by AASHTO's Strategic Highway Safety Plan and NYSDOT's similar Comprehensive Highway Safety Plan. These plans call for action in twenty-two strategic emphasis areas including drivers, non-motorized users, vehicles, highways, emergency services and management systems. Enforcement of traffic laws is an integral part of a comprehensive plan. Capital investment to modify highway design is a large piece of the budget. AASHTO's bullet list of issues to address includes:

Drivers

- Young
- Unlicensed/Suspended/Revoked
- Older
- Aggressive
- Impaired
- Distracted/Fatigued
- Seat Belt Use
- Speed

Special Users

- Pedestrians
- Bicyclists

Vehicles

- Motorcycles
- Heavy Trucks

Highways

- Trees
- Run Off the Road
- Horizontal Curves
- Utility Poles
- Unsignalized Intersections
- Head-On Collisions
- Head-On Crashes on Freeways
- Work Zones

EMS

- Rural Emergency Medical Services

Management

- Data
- Integrated Safety Management Process

Beyond this list, a comprehensive safety program in the Capital District would also include attention to local streets as well as highways; introduction of traffic calming features, improved site designs and structured street systems; with the goal of reducing points of conflict, creating safer pedestrian/bicyclist/vehicle operating environments, and reducing the severity of impact by lowering speeds in residential and commercial areas.

A "big initiative" of this type could be pictured as one that implements safety-specific physical improvements at several times the pace funded by SAFETEA-LU, and could enhance the benefit possible from other initiatives (BRT, greenways, street reconfiguration, and suburban town center initiatives, for example). Extensive substitution of roundabouts for signalized intersections could be expected to be included in the initiative. A \$10 M annual initiative beyond current expenses would be the approximate scale of this program.

Rationale: The loss of life and limb on the highway system is tolerated well beyond reason in the US. A major commitment to a comprehensive safety program in the Capital District would reflect a desire for safe neighborhoods, safe streets, safe travel and recreation, and quality spaces.