

Business Item

Transportation Committee



Committee meeting date: January 12, 2026

For the Metropolitan Council: January 28, 2026

Business Item: 2026-009

Adoption of 2026 Roadway Safety Performance Targets

District(s), member(s):	All districts and members
Policy/legal reference:	23 CFR Part 490
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Division/department:	Metropolitan Transportation Services (MTS)

Proposed action

That the Metropolitan Council adopt the 2026 roadway safety performance targets, which advance a long-term goal of zero deaths:

1. Number of all fatalities: no more than 71
2. Fatal injuries per 100 million VMT: no more than 0.25
3. Number of all serious injuries: no more than 445
4. Serious injuries per 100 million VMT: no more than 1.55
5. Pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities and serious injuries: no more than 110

Background

All state departments of transportation (DOTs) and metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) must have performance measurement programs and set targets to monitor progress. Targets for the safety performance measures must be adopted annually. The safety targets serve a dual purpose:

- Inform planning and programming to reduce fatal and serious injuries
- Track performance of the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)

After the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) receives statewide safety targets from MnDOT annually in August, MPOs must either support the statewide target or choose an alternative target by February 27 the following year. Federal requirements specify five safety performance measures for both state DOTs and MPOs that must have annual targets:

1. Number of all fatalities
2. Fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles travelled (VMT)
3. Number of all serious injuries
4. Serious injuries per 100 million VMT
5. Number of combined pedestrian and bicycle fatalities and serious injuries

State DOTs are required to make significant progress on achieving their statewide safety targets; they are subject to additional HSIP requirements if they fail to make significant

progress. MPOs are not subject to additional federal requirements if they fail to make significant progress.

Target setting options

Metropolitan Council staff evaluated two target setting options described here; after considering technical stakeholder feedback and consistency with regional policy, staff recommend adopting targets based on the Option B method.

Option A. Continue method based on the Strategic Highway Safety Plan

The Met Council's current method sets regional targets on a straight-line decline from 2020/2021 regional targets to the region's share of statewide goals in the Minnesota Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP). The 2020-2024 SHSP set a five-year goal to reduce traffic deaths to 225 or fewer statewide and serious injuries to 980 or fewer statewide by 2025, on the way to the long-term goal of zero.

Over the previous four years, this method resulted in steeply declining targets from the baseline year to 2025. Upon target adoption in 2025, the regional targets matched the estimated regional share of the 2025 statewide goal. The SHSP was recently updated, and the 2025-2029 plan extends the same statewide goal to 2030. As a result, continuing the Met Council's current target setting method would hold regional targets flat until at least 2030, except for changes to rate targets based on variation in VMT.

Regional safety performance worsened with the onset of COVID-19, and crash outcomes have not yet returned to pre-pandemic performance. This has resulted in significant divergence between target performance and actual crash outcomes people travelling in our region experience.

Key message: Holding targets flat may better align with the federal performance measurement program's intent to set targets that are achievable in the near term. However, previous technical and policymaker discussion have indicated some prefer targets that hold investment processes accountable to a long-term goal of zero deaths and serious injuries.

Option B. Change to method based on Transportation Policy Plan objective

The Met Council could change its target setting method to track performance with the Imagine 2050 planning horizon. This method would set targets on a straight-line decline from current 2025 targets to zero in all measures by 2050.

This method would result in constantly declining targets, though at a slower pace than the previous four years. The Met Council will continue to adopt targets annually as required by regulation and could re-evaluate this approach in any future year.

Key message: Some feedback noted that basing targets on a regional plan would be more intuitive to interpret. Constantly declining targets are more consistent with preferences indicated in previous policymaker discussions. These targets do not represent a forecast of likely outcomes, and significant policymaking and investment would be required to achieve these safety outcomes.

Performance assessment

- Both fatal and serious injuries remained roughly flat in 2024 compared to the previous year, but these outcomes remain elevated compared to the three-year average prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Serious injuries remain at an elevated level following a sharp rise in 2022.
- Pedestrian and bicyclist injuries appeared to improve in 2023 but again rose in 2024.
- Safety performance targets were not achieved in 2024 (see Table 1).
- Preliminary data for 2025 through October shows a decline in all fatalities but slight increase in all serious injuries compared to the prior three years. Pedestrian fatalities and serious injuries have increased while bicyclist fatalities and serious injuries have

decreased compared to the prior three years. All measures except bicyclist fatalities remain significantly higher than pre-pandemic averages. See Table 2 for more detail.

*Table 1: Measure Performance, 2024, Metropolitan Planning Area**

Measure	2017-2019 Average	2022-2024 Average	2023 Actual	2024 Actual	2024 Target
All fatalities	130	159	150	148	≤ 74
Fatal injury rate per 100m VMT	0.44	0.57	0.54	0.52	≤ 0.26
All serious injuries	796	932	922	926	≤ 464
Serious injury rate per 100m VMT	2.71	3.34	3.31	3.24	≤ 1.64
Non-motorized fatal and serious injuries	202	225	195	245	≤ 115
Pedestrian fatalities	27	32	29	34	N/A
Bicyclist fatalities	6	3	3	4	N/A
Pedestrian serious injuries	127	132	109	147	N/A
Bicyclist serious injuries	42	59	54	60	N/A

*Table 2: Preliminary Performance, January 1-October 31 2025, 7-County Metro**

Measure	2017-2019 Jan-Oct Average	2022-2024 Jan-Oct Average	2025 Jan-Oct Actual	% change over 2017-2019	% change over 2022-2024
All fatalities	106	137	126	+18%	-8%
All serious injuries	672	792	804	+20%	+1%
Non-motorized fatal and serious injuries	165	202	210	+28%	+4%
Pedestrian fatalities	21	28	30	+41%	+8%
Bicyclist fatalities	4	3	1	-77%	-70%
Pedestrian serious injuries	99	117	133	+35%	+14%
Bicyclist serious injuries	40	54	46	+14%	-15%

* Data courtesy of MnDOT. Preliminary 2025 data only includes the 7-county metro; crash injuries occurring in the urban portions of Wright and Sherburne county are not included. Some totals may not match sums of disaggregated measures due to rounding.



Rationale

The 2050 Transportation Policy Plan (TPP) includes a roadway safety objective that “people do not die or face life-changing injuries when using any form of transportation.” These measures are also included in that plan to assess its performance. The proposed performance targets directly support implementation of Imagine 2050’s Healthy and Safe Communities goal and also meet federal metropolitan planning requirements. Reducing crash injuries to or below the regional safety targets will require coordinated action on resource allocation, policies, and investment decisions from partners at all levels in the region.

Thrive lens analysis

On Feb. 12, 2025, the Council adopted Imagine 2050, which builds on policy direction in Thrive MSP 2040. The highway safety performance measures are broadly associated with all five Thrive Outcomes, most directly to the Livability outcome. This action promotes the Livability outcome by focusing on the lives and safety of all residents within the region and actions that affect their health and wellness. The safety performance measures promote creation and improvement of infrastructure necessary for a safe transportation system.

Funding

There are no direct funding implications with this action.

Small business inclusion

There are no direct impacts to small business with this action.

