



# INNOVATOR



*Data-driven safety analysis can augment and inform decision making using all levels of data.*

*Credit: FHWA*

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# Data in All Decisions: The Evolution of Data-Driven Safety Analysis

Where should we install roadway safety countermeasures? Will people be safer if we add that crosswalk? Which of the intersection designs we are considering is safest?

These are the kind of questions transportation practitioners ask themselves every day to try to make roadways safer but, with so many variables at play, it can be difficult to know which of many possible decisions is best.

That's where **data-driven safety analysis** (DDSA) can help.

DDSA is an approach to roadway design that says, to the greatest extent possible, practitioners should incorporate the use of data in their decision making.

FHWA first promoted DDSA in 2015 as part of the **Every Day Counts** (EDC) program. The EDC DDSA team trained staff at agencies across the country on data-driven tools like the **Highway Safety Manual** (HSM) Part C, approaches like **systemic analysis**, and proven countermeasures like **Local Road Safety Plans**.

The power of these approaches and tools is they can help to not only identify locations of past severe crashes ("hot spots") but also to predict where future crashes might take place, so agencies can prevent them. DDSA predictive tools have become popular across the country since 2015 because of the opportunity they provide to proactively save lives.

While the resources initially promoted during EDC are still valid, DDSA has evolved over the last 9 years. Tools and strategies have increased in number and quality. New data sources have become available. Agencies have more options for safety analysis than ever.

Additionally, as DDSA continues to evolve, researchers, public agencies, and industry are exploring the use of artificial intelligence and machine learning that may, in the future, allow them to identify improvements to predictive and systemic approaches.

In some cases, advances may be made in the statistical understanding of cause and effect with these newer analysis techniques. In other cases, these newer analysis techniques may improve the efficiency of working with available data and analysis of it at the scales needed to tackle the roadway safety crisis. Newer professions such as data scientists are now working in the transportation industry to help find new ways to solve problems with DDSA.

For agencies selecting safety countermeasures, these advances mean more to study, understand, and incorporate, which can overwhelm practitioners. However, according to FHWA's DDSA team, it is crucial, and possible, for agencies to match these evolving DDSA approaches to their available resources.

## Progress Over Perfection

A current misconception is that, because data and tools have improved, they can predict crashes perfectly and therefore only predictive models should be used in DDSA. When assessing which tools to use, FHWA DDSA Program Manager Matt Hinshaw says practitioners should not let perfect be the enemy of the good.

"The predictive tools like the HSM Part C and applying crash modification factors are useful, and people should use them more as we seek to further integrate safety into the project development process," Hinshaw said. "But it is easy, especially for technically minded people, to only

incorporate DDSA if we can predict the results of our decisions with 100-percent accuracy. If not, we don't want to use it."

Hinshaw says DDSA approaches and data sources have increased, but none is perfect, and that is okay.

"We have broadened our horizons as to which methods fall under DDSA. This can include any form of evidence-based results. Examples are predictive models, the systemic safety approach and risk-based approaches, surrogate measures of safety, design flag assessments, **Safe System Approach** frameworks such as intersection conflict point analysis, transportation system management and operations strategies, and **video analytics**."

Another misconception Hinshaw has heard is that an agency does not have enough data for DDSA.

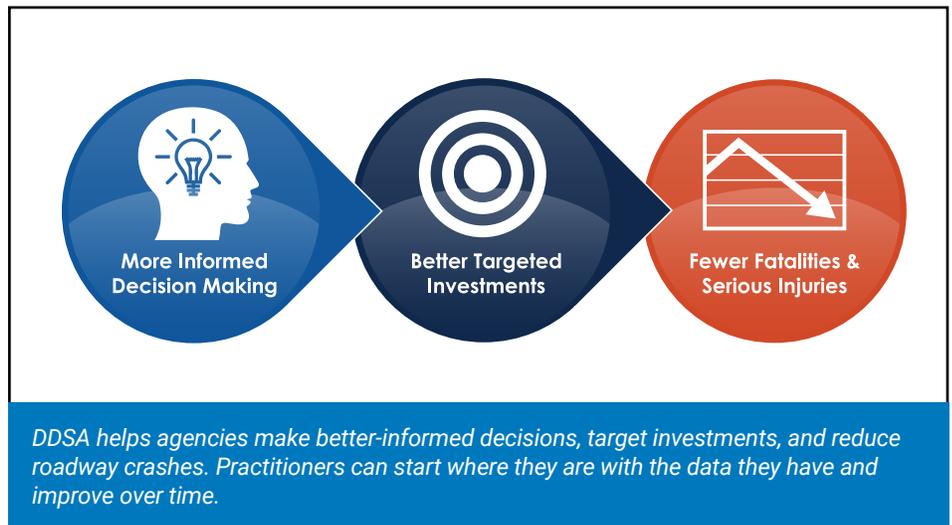
"While more data is usually better, it is not a deal breaker if you don't have robust data on hand," Hinshaw said. "DDSA has evolved so that practitioners can usually incorporate it at some level no matter their situation. The idea is to start where you are with what you have and improve over time. We can find a way to use data to improve safety for any agency, especially with the systemic safety approach."

### One Approach, Many Tools

The overarching concept for DDSA is that a standardized, consistent, data and evidence-driven approach will lead to design decisions that prioritize safety.

DDSA can also include qualitative assessments that support project needs and design elements, including **Road Safety Audits** and public and stakeholder surveys, as long as they are guided by DDSA principles. In addition, a variety of tools can be used during the same project, such as analyzing a proposed interchange with a variety of resulting metrics to compare.

"Think of DDSA like a menu of options, with different methodologies to choose from based



Credit: FHWA

on your available data and desired output," said Jerry Roche, FHWA Safety Integration Team Leader. "Some methods may be preferred in certain contexts. Human judgment is still needed."

Ideally, agencies will incorporate DDSA into every stage of the project development process, placing safety on equal footing with other project impacts like operations and using data to justify their decision making.

### A Place for DDSA and DDSA in Its Place

The goal of DDSA is not to replace human decision making, but to augment and inform it. "Engineering judgment and reaching consensus on project teams made of professional safety, traffic operations and design staff should always be the bedrock of the decision-making process and help work through DDSA," Hinshaw said. "We have great opportunity to save lives here, if we'll take advantage of the data and tools we have."

## MORE INFORMATION

- Visit FHWA's DDSA **webpage** for links to the DDSA Toolbox and other resources.
- @ Contact **Matt Hinshaw**, FHWA Office of Safety, for information on DDSA and technical assistance.



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# Separated Bike Lanes—Making Roads Safer for Bicyclists

Most fatal and serious injury bicyclist crashes occur at non-intersection locations. Nearly one-third of these crashes occur when motorists are overtaking bicyclists and the speed and size differential between vehicles and bicycles can lead to severe injury. In many areas, people are not comfortable riding a bicycle due to their discomfort riding too close to traffic.

One approach to making roadways safer for bicyclists is adding separated bike lanes. Separated bicycle lanes are those that use a buffer space with vertical elements—such as flexible delineator posts, curbs, or vegetation—between the bicycle lane and motorized traffic lanes. This approach recognizes the vulnerability of bicyclists and aligns with the **Safe System Approach**—separating road users in space can enhance safety for all.

Separated bicycle lanes can mitigate or prevent interactions, conflicts, and crashes between bicyclists and motor vehicles. In fact, converting traditional bike lanes to a separated lane with low-cost flexible delineators can reduce bicycle-vehicle crashes by up to **53 percent**.

With this being the case, then why aren't separated bicycle lanes more common?

From the 1950s to 1970s, most transportation professionals **concentrated on the motor vehicle network**. However, interest in bicycling was increasing, which led to the development of the first national design guidance, the 1974 edition of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Bike Guide. That first edition recommended bike lanes that were separated both from vehicles and pedestrians. However, some advocates promoted designs that would serve accomplished and confident bicyclists only. Subsequent editions of the AASHTO guide reflected this influence and affected design practices for decades to come. In recent years there has been impetus to better address the needs of all ages and

abilities in bikeway networks. Cities and organizations like the National Association of City Transportation Officials have prompted changes in practice. FHWA released its Separated Bike Lane Planning and Design Guide in 2015. The **recent update** to the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways (MUTCD) gives greater consideration to all road users and incorporates standards for traffic control devices on separated bike lanes.

“Bicyclists are vulnerable, but much of our past guidance did not include the practices that we now recognize as the Safe System Approach,” said Brooke Struve, FHWA Resource Center. “If bikeways have been included at all, they have often been a lane of minimal width placed next to high-speed traffic. The Safe System Approach tells us that bicyclists need to be separated, they need their own space. Research confirms that this will reduce severe crashes. We have design guidance, like FHWA’s Bikeway Selection Guide, and look forward to more guidance that is currently under development.”

If a community decides to provide bike lanes or a designated pedestrian area separated from vehicles, FHWA’s **Bikeway Selection Guide** tells agencies which type of bikeway may be most appropriate for the context. The MUTCD tells



*Richmond, VA, has been working to implement separated bike lanes throughout the city.*

Credit: City of Richmond, VA

agencies **which traffic control devices are needed** to communicate that to all road users. New crash modification factors reveal the safety benefits.

## Separated Bike Lanes in Practice

At the start of 2011, Richmond, VA, had a total of 8 miles of bike lanes. At the start of 2024 and over a decade of focus, this mid-sized American city has a network of more than 70 miles, most of it buffered or separated from vehicle traffic.

Richmond is driven to reach its **Vision Zero** goals by 2030, and a robust bike lane network is an important part of its work. Roadway conversions have not only proven a good tool for crash reduction, but they have also given Richmond opportunities to install a variety of bike lanes within existing right-of-way. After its Bike Master Plan was created in 2015, Richmond now builds buffered bike lanes on select urban arterials, implementing many of them in coordination with its pavement maintenance program. This approach, rather than relying solely on State and Federal funds, saves both time and money.

Richmond applies an equity lens citywide, with a particular emphasis on the High Injury Street Network and historically marginalized communities through its **Path to Equity policy document**. Richmond's first separated bike lanes appeared in 2018 near a disadvantaged public housing community where a four-lane, median-divided road allowed for the implementation of a parking-separated bike lane. The conversion enhanced the space for people who bike and reduced crossing distances and exposure to crossing threats for people who walk, regardless of age or ability.

"Through these efforts, Richmond has seen greater bike use," said Jakob Helmboldt, Richmond's Pedestrian, Bicycle, and Trails Coordinator. "This includes a distinct AM and PM commute pattern in downtown on our two-way separated bike lane on Franklin Street from the Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU)



*This design uses parking as an additional layer of separation between traffic and bike lanes.*

Credit: City of Richmond, VA

campus to the Virginia State Capitol Building. Franklin Street's success is leading to an extension through the VCU campus that is currently under design."

In addition to enhanced bike access and safety, Richmond is seeing speed management benefits and a reduction in pedestrian crashes on many streets. Richmond is also moving forward with more permanent infrastructure upgrades on the most successful routes. The most notable is reinforcing Franklin Street downtown, where the Department of Public Works plans to install concrete curbing in place of flex posts, adding more substantial and aesthetically pleasing separation.

## MORE INFORMATION

- View the FHWA Proven Safety Countermeasures **webpage** and **factsheet** on bicycle lanes for details on applications and considerations for separated bicycle lanes.
- @ Contact **Becky Crowe**, FHWA Office of Safety, for information on pedestrian and bicyclist-focused approaches to safety.



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# Safe Streets and Roads for All

## *A New Wave of Funding for Local and Tribal Roadway Safety Innovation*

A first-of-its-kind discretionary grant program called **Safe Streets and Roads for All** (SS4A) is helping local communities design and deliver comprehensive roadway safety plans and improvements that will save lives and prevent serious injuries on the Nation's streets and roads. Created by the 2021 **Bipartisan Infrastructure Law**, SS4A has the potential to vastly improve safety for all road users by providing \$5 billion over 5 years (fiscal years 2022–2026) directly to local and Tribal agencies to address their unique roadway safety needs.

“Through three announcements in 2023, SS4A grants have provided \$1.7 billion in direct funding to over 1,000 local rural, Tribal, and urban communities,” said Paul Teicher, Senior Policy Analyst at the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT). “Combined, the awards made to date will improve roadway safety planning for around 70 percent of the Nation's population.”

### **Two Ways to Access SS4A**

SS4A funding is divided into two grant types. One is for safety action plan development, supplemental planning, and demonstration activities. The other is for plan implementation. Agencies are required to have safety action plans that meet specified criteria prior to applying for implementation funding.

“Under the SS4A FY 2024 **Notice of Funding Opportunity**, more than \$656 million is available for Planning and Demonstration Grants,” said FHWA SS4A Team Leader Jason Broehm. “These funds can support development of new Action Plans, supplemental planning activities such as developing a speed management plan or lighting plan, and demonstration activities such as feasibility studies using quick-build activities.”

“In the previous funding round, the vast majority of eligible Planning and Demonstration Grant applicants received grant awards,” said Broehm.

### **Action Plans and Demonstration Activities**

For SS4A, comprehensive safety action plans are developed using a data-driven approach to identify roadway safety challenges and help agencies systematically prioritize safety projects and strategies to be implemented over time, tracking progress along the way.

SS4A funding is helping communities address roadway safety through a comprehensive **Safe System Approach** that uses several complementary types of interventions aligned with the objectives in USDOT's **National Roadway Safety Strategy**: safer people, safer roads, safer vehicles, safer speeds, and post-crash care.

Examples include Belgrade, MT, which is developing a safety action plan and testing **crosswalk visibility enhancements**, and Gering, NE, which is creating a safe streets action plan and piloting the use of **rectangular rapid flashing beacons (RRFBs)** on arterial pedestrian crossings.

Crosswalk visibility enhancements and RRFBs were included in **Every Day Counts** (EDC) round 5 through the **Safe Transportation for Every Pedestrian** (STEP) initiative. Deerfield Beach, FL, will use its grant to implement a temporary-build **Road Diet**, a strategy included in EDC round 3, by using pavement markings and tubular markers to create a median, center turn lane, and buffered bicycle lane.

In West Hartford, CT, the number of fatal and serious injury crashes has **more than doubled** over the past 4 years, so the town pursued SS4A funding to pilot a speed safety camera (SSC) program as part of its Vision Zero initiative. West Hartford will use its award to install fixed SSCs at 15 locations. When deployed as fixed units, SSCs can reduce crashes on urban principal arterials **up to 54 percent**.

The town of Colonie, NY, received an SS4A grant to support a technology-driven safety initiative focused on **crash prevention and post-crash care**. Colonie's emergency medical services



## SS4A AWARDS

### FY 2023 Implementation Grants

View fact sheets on [FY 2022](#) and [2023](#) SS4A Implementation Grants.

Credit: U.S. Department of Transportation

(EMS) department partnered with police and neighboring EMS agencies to pilot a system that alerts drivers to the presence of nearby emergency vehicles at crash scenes as well as a software platform that aids responders in treating crash victims.

### Opportunities for Implementation

Communities are using the SS4A Implementation Grants to help fund safety projects and strategies they have identified as their most pressing safety problems.

The Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government in Kentucky is using SS4A funds to **implement safety upgrades** on the highest fatal and serious injury corridor identified in its Action Plan. In underserved communities on this corridor, many crashes occur due to the lack of safe multi-modal transportation options. Planned upgrades include innovations promoted in past rounds of EDC such as **restricted crossing U-turns** and **raised pedestrian crossing islands**, as well

as improved **lighting**, which is currently being promoted through **EDC-7**.

Jonesboro, AR, received implementation funding for projects in two roadway corridors to **improve pedestrian and driver safety** in underserved Census tracts. The first project includes adding **crosswalk visibility enhancements** and **pedestrian hybrid beacons** on a busy portion of four-lane highway where children account for much of the pedestrian activity. The second project will install LED streetlights along a 2.4-mile stretch of roadway that accounts for 11 percent of the city's nighttime pedestrian fatalities. The **improved lighting** is expected to benefit the safety of both pedestrians and drivers within the project limits.

Webster County, IA, will improve the safety of 32.5 miles of **rural county roads** that have been identified as high-risk locations for crashes and fatalities. The project aims to reduce the number and severity of the county's most prevalent crash type—improper lane departures—by implementing **Proven Safety Countermeasures** such as widening and paving shoulders and adding edge and center line **rumble strips**.

Access the full award lists of fiscal year **2022** and **2023** grants to learn how more agencies are using SS4A funds to improve safety for all road users.

### Ride the Wave of SS4A

SS4A is continuing to advance many of the innovations promoted by the EDC program. Applications are now being accepted for the next round of SS4A funding. Agencies can visit the **SS4A website** for more information about the program, **eligibility** details, and tips on how to **how to apply**.

## MORE INFORMATION

-  View the U.S. DOT's Safe Streets and Roads for All Grants **webinar series**.
-  Visit the **FHWA Highway Safety Programs** webpage for information on selecting countermeasures and strategies.



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# Award-Winning Safety Projects Feature EDC Innovations

The 2023 [National Roadway Safety Awards](#) honored public agencies for safety achievements that are helping move the United States toward zero deaths and serious injuries on the Nation's roadways. The biennial competition, which is jointly sponsored by FHWA and the Roadway Safety Foundation, also provides an opportunity to share these successes with others so the practices can be replicated nationwide.

Following are examples of winning projects that employed safety innovations championed by FHWA's [Every Day Counts](#) program, including [data-driven safety analysis \(DDSA\)](#), [reduced left-turn conflict intersections](#), [high-friction surface treatments \(HFST\)](#), and the [Safe Transportation for Every Pedestrian](#) and [Focus on Reducing Rural Roadway Departures](#) initiatives. Visit the Roadway Safety Foundation's [webpage](#) for a full list of winners and honorable mentions.

## Reducing Intersection Crash Risk

The Acadiana Planning Commission (APC), an economic development district serving several parishes in Louisiana, used a [data-driven approach](#) to address fatal and serious-injury crashes occurring due to drivers running through the back of T-intersections. APC and Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD) staff analyzed crash and other data to identify T-intersection locations with a high likelihood of run-through roadway departure crashes. The DOTD then installed signage, redundant and oversized stop signs, transverse [rumble strips](#), and/or flashing beacons at the terminal roadway's approach. The locations where these improvements were implemented saw a

reduction in run-through intersection crashes of at least 50 percent, with the majority of locations seeing a complete elimination of this crash type.

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) demonstrated that increasing pavement friction treatment (HFST) at intersections can [reduce crash risk](#) by helping motorists stop more quickly and retain better control. As part of a pilot project, FDOT installed [HFST](#) at three signalized, urban intersections in Tampa to study how much it would reduce improper stopping behavior, such as vehicles stopping in crosswalks. FDOT's analysis of the three study sites showed that HFST reduced the overall rate of improper stopping by 11 to 31 percent. An FDOT [news release](#) noted that the findings are significant because between 2013 and 2022, about 27 percent of traffic fatalities and 35 percent of serious injuries statewide occurred at intersections.

The Minnesota DOT (MnDOT) implemented widespread use of [J-turn intersections](#) that have significantly reduced the severity of crashes on high-speed divided highways. J-turns, also known as [restricted crossing U-turns](#), modify the direct left-turn and through movements from



The graphic features the Minnesota Department of Transportation logo (a stylized 'm' with a green leaf) and the text 'DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION' in blue. Below this, a large white play button icon is centered over the text 'J-turns' in white. Underneath 'J-turns' is the slogan 'Keeping traffic moving safely' in white, flanked by two vertical white lines. The background is a blurred image of a road with a J-turn. At the bottom, a blue banner contains white text: 'The Minnesota DOT used community engagement tools such as [videos](#) to boost widespread J-turn deployment by raising awareness of safety benefits.'

Credit: Minnesota Department of Transportation

cross-street approaches. These intersections simplify decision-making for drivers and minimize the potential for higher severity crash types. Following the success of its first J-turn installation in 2010, MnDOT has built J-turns at more than 80 intersections, mostly on divided rural expressways. A 2021 MnDOT evaluation found a 69-percent reduction in fatal and serious-injury crashes at those intersections.

### Improving Bicyclist and Pedestrian Safety

The South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization (SJTPO) developed a plan to prioritize making roads and intersections **safer for cyclists and pedestrians** in rural Cumberland County, NJ. The SJTPO used a comprehensive approach involving **DDSA** and input from local officials, stakeholders, and the public to prioritize locations with the greatest safety needs for cyclists and pedestrians and select appropriate countermeasures. The resulting **Cumberland County Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Action Plan** helped local officials secure Federal funding to design and implement safety improvements in six busy corridors in three cities. The \$400,000 cost of developing the plan yielded \$32 million worth of federally funded projects that will enhance crosswalk visibility, shorten intersection crossings, and narrow roads to slow vehicular traffic.

### Proactive Funding Approaches for Low-Cost, Effective Safety Measures

The California DOT (Caltrans) piloted a program allowing its districts to install **standalone safety enhancements** more quickly than through traditional capital project delivery. In the first two fiscal years of the Highway Maintenance 4 (HM-4) Safety program, Caltrans added \$21.5 million annually to its maintenance budget for implementation of **Proven Safety Countermeasures** such as **high-visibility crosswalks** and **curve warning signs**. The program allowed Caltrans to complete safety enhancements in 4,540 locations, exceeding the pilot's goal by more than 1,000.

The Virginia DOT received an honorable mention for its use of **systemic analysis** to fund lower-cost but more widespread safety projects aimed at preventing traffic fatalities and serious injuries. Traditionally, VDOT made spot safety improvements in response to crashes occurring

The graphic features a blue background with the title "Cumberland County Bicycle & Pedestrian Safety Action Plan 2022" in white and orange text. Below the title is a collage of six photographs showing various street scenes: a brick building, a street with a car, a crosswalk with a person, a street with a car and a person, a street with a car and a person, and a street with a car and a person. In the bottom right corner of the collage is the logo for the SJTPO Cumberland County BIKE PED SAFETY ACTION PLAN, which includes icons of a bicycle and a pedestrian.

*Cumberland County's Safety Action Plan helped advance multiple bicycle and pedestrian safety projects on local roadways in New Jersey.*

Credit: South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization and Cumberland County, NJ

at a specific site. Under the systemic approach, a method championed by the EDC **DDSA** initiative, VDOT evaluates a variety of factors that contribute to crashes, including road design, traffic patterns, and development that attracts pedestrians or cyclists, then applies those findings to the statewide system of roads and intersections to identify those with similar, potentially dangerous conditions that need correcting before a crash occurs.

### MORE INFORMATION

➤ Visit the Roadway Safety Foundation **web-page** for details on all of the winning projects and honorable mentions.



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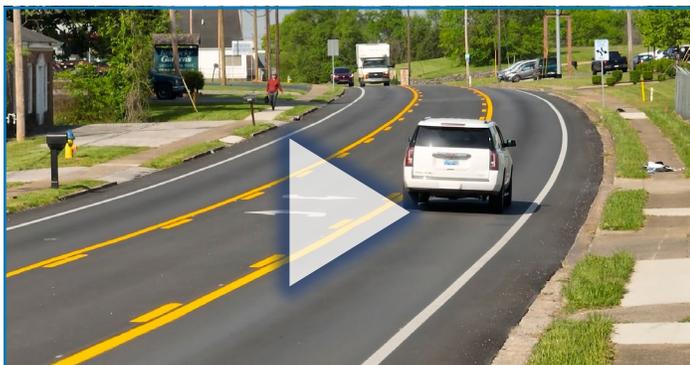
# States **innovate!**

## Alaska Adds RRFBs at Roundabouts

The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) installed **rectangular rapid-flashing beacons** (RRFBs) at the crosswalks at the entrances and exits of the Dowling Road roundabouts in Anchorage. Although other RRFBs exist in the State, these are the first of their kind in Anchorage and the **first to be installed** at any roundabout in Alaska. According to the Alaska DOT&PF, driver yielding rates to pedestrians in crosswalks at these roundabouts tend to be low. In what will be its first study of the RRFB devices, the Alaska DOT&PF plans to measure the yielding rates at these locations over 3 years and compare them to rates prior to RRFB installation.

## Kentucky Promotes Safer Road Solutions

The Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) recently developed an online public engagement resource called **SAFERoad Solutions** to explain road designs that improve safety, mobility, and efficiency. The guide covers 17 topics, including **roadway reconfiguration** (Road Diets), **restricted crossing U-turns**, and **double crossover diamond** (diverging diamond) interchanges. Each topic includes a video, illustration, and downloadable fact sheet that communicate why the design is effective and how to navigate it.



Credit: Kentucky Transportation Cabinet

The Kentucky Transportation Cabinet's **SAFERoad Solutions** guide provides videos and factsheets for public engagement on designs such as **roadway reconfiguration**.

## Michigan Deploys Adaptive Signal Control Technology

To help overcome operational obstacles posed by growing tourism in the Traverse City area, the North Region of the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) designed and deployed **adaptive signal control technologies** (ASCT), closed-circuit television cameras, and WiFi/Bluetooth readers aimed at reducing congestion, improving travel time reliability, and reducing traffic crashes. The system enables MDOT to monitor and measure traffic operations and make regular adjustments for optimization. Learn more in a **case study** recently published by the National Operations Center of Excellence.

## Mississippi Expands Roundabout Use

The Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT) is adding a new roundabout at the intersection of U.S. 72 and State Route 7 in Benton County that will be the **first roundabout of its kind** in Mississippi to be installed on a four-lane highway. **Roundabouts** are an FHWA Proven Safety Countermeasure that can meet a wide range of traffic conditions while substantially reducing crashes that result in serious injury or death by reducing conflict points and promoting lower speeds.

## Ohio Sees Success with Variable Speed Limits

The Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) and Lake County, OH, Sheriff's Department are seeing a **reduction in crashes** after working together to develop the first Variable Speed Limit (VSL) section of highway in the State. VSL systems are a **weather-responsive management strategy** that use digital speed limit signs to reduce the speed limit during adverse weather, such as the lake-effect snowstorms Lake County receives during winter. Installed on a portion of Interstate 90 (I-90), the VSL system works in coordination with ODOT's Intelligent



Credit: Mississippi Department of Transportation

The Mississippi DOT is expanding its use of roundabouts by installing one on a four-lane highway.

Transportation System, which includes traffic cameras, dynamic message signs, and road weather information stations that monitor visibility and precipitation. The ODOT Traffic Management Center receives the road weather information and works with local law enforcement and ODOT managers to make decisions on when to lower speed limits. According to an ODOT [news release](#), from 2005 to 2015, this section of I-90 saw a yearly average of 76 crashes reported, with 37 in the winter. Since the implementation of the VSL system in 2017, crashes along this stretch of I-90 dropped by

more than 35 percent to an average of 49 per year, with 21 in the winter.

### States Integrate VPI into the NEPA Process

A recent FHWA [report](#) highlights case studies on eight transportation projects that incorporated [virtual public involvement](#) (VPI) practices into the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. The case studies show how agencies used a hybrid approach to public involvement or virtual-only approach (supplemented with traditional outreach methods like mailings and newspaper ads) during the COVID-19 pandemic. Agencies highlighted include Multnomah County, OR, which held an [online open house](#) and developed a map-based story-telling tool for its [Earthquake-Ready Burnside Bridge Project](#), and the Virginia Department of Transportation, which held virtual Q&A sessions to provide sufficient time for dialogue about its [Interstate 495 Express Lanes](#) project outside of the public hearing. Visit the FHWA's Environmental Review Toolkit [webpage](#) to learn how all eight agencies integrated VPI methods into NEPA.



Credit: Ohio Department of Transportation

Watch an Ohio DOT [video](#) to learn how the agency is using a variable speed limit system to reduce crashes on Interstate 90.



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# INNOVATOR

INNOVATOR, published by the FHWA's Office of Innovation and Workforce Solutions, advances the implementation of innovative technologies and accelerated project delivery methods in highway transportation.

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## Applications Open for AID Demonstration Grants

Let's Innovate! The **Accelerated Innovation Deployment (AID) Demonstration** program provides incentive funds to eligible entities to accelerate the implementation and adoption of innovation in highway transportation. The 2024 AID Demonstration solicitation for FY 2024 is open and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) plans to award up to \$12.5 million in grants. Visit the **AID Demonstration projects webpage** to learn about the 127 grants and more than \$95.7 million dollars that FHWA has awarded since the program's launch in 2014.

# AID Demo

Accelerated Innovation Deployment

AID Demonstration funds are distributed through a competitive discretionary grant process. The required Notice of Intent must be submitted to **Grants.gov** on or before April 16, 2024, with an application deadline of May 28, 2024. Details on this funding opportunity are available on the AID Demonstration **webpage** and on **Grants.gov** (funding opportunity number 693JJ324NF-AIDDP).

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