

Alberta Traffic Safety Plan and Community Mobilization Strategy

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ABSTRACT

The Alberta government is committed to reducing the number of collisions and resulting fatalities and injuries on Alberta roads through the *Alberta Traffic Safety Plan: Saving Lives on Alberta's Roads* – the only Provincial approach to traffic safety in Canada.

For the second consecutive year, traffic fatalities and injuries have declined in Alberta. In spite of increases in population, drivers and vehicles, traffic fatalities decreased 14 per cent from 2008 to 2009, and traffic injuries also dropped 13 per cent.

Although this is encouraging, much work remains as in Alberta in 2009 more than 157,000 traffic collisions occurred in Alberta resulting in 351 fatalities and more than 19,000 serious injuries.

Under the leadership of Alberta Transportation's Office of Traffic Safety, the Alberta Traffic Safety Plan is a comprehensive cross-ministry strategy designed to reduce traffic-related deaths and injuries in the province. The Alberta Traffic Safety Plan was developed in consultation with provincial stakeholders, used research and best practice information from national and international sources, and supported national road safety strategies.

The first traffic safety plan was released in 2006 and outlined key initiatives to help prevent motor vehicle collisions, build safer roads, establish and enforce traffic laws, and better educate Albertans about traffic safety. The next version Alberta Traffic Safety Plan, to be released in the fall of 2011 will identify a mix of interventions for improving road safety.

During development of the Alberta Traffic Safety Plan it was recognized that in order to achieve desired goals it was critical to have coordinated, collaborative community based delivery of programs, initiatives and communications throughout the province.

In response, the Alberta Traffic Safety Plan Community Mobilization Strategy was developed and implemented in 2008 as a unique approach to addressing traffic safety – based on international best practice.

A first in Canada, the Community Mobilization Strategy is an initiative in traffic safety that provides a flexible, wide-reaching approach to communication and protocols to support accountability and continuous improvement in the provision of traffic safety services at the community level – in alignment with the objectives of the Alberta Traffic Safety Plan.

This paper describes the development, implementation, results to date, and next steps relating to the Alberta Traffic Safety Plan and the Alberta Traffic Safety Plan Community Mobilization Strategyⁱ.

INTRODUCTION

In Alberta, on average every year more than 400 people die and more than 26,000 are injured in traffic collisions. In 2009 approximately 1 person was killed, 53 people were injured and 431 traffic collisions were reported each and every day.

The Alberta Traffic Safety Plan (TSP) and Alberta Traffic Safety Plan Community Mobilization Strategy are the result of the collaborative efforts of the provincial government and non-government stakeholder organizations. Involving almost 100 working sub-committee members who have joined forces to take action on traffic safety this plan was “made-in-Alberta”, yet designed to reflect Alberta’s contribution to national targets for reducing fatalities and serious injuries caused by motor vehicle collisions.

Good progress has been made during the period of the first version TSP (2007-2010) in terms of reductions in traffic crashes and casualties from them. Building on this success, the Alberta government is now finalizing a successor plan which will lead to even further reductions. Alberta’s new approach to road safety improvement is guided by the *Safe System Approach*, which involves two fundamental objectives: making Alberta’s road transport system more forgiving of human error, and minimizing the level of unsafe road user behaviour.

ALBERTA TRAFFIC SAFETY PLAN: SAVING LIVES ON ALBERTA’S ROADS (2006 – 2011)

In the spring of 2004, retired RCMP Assistant Commissioner Don McDermid was requested to review the state of traffic safety in Alberta. After consulting with government departments and key stakeholders, McDermid prepared the report *Saving Lives on Alberta’s Roads: Report and Recommendations for a Traffic Collision Strategy and Injury Reduction Strategy* [1].

The first version *Alberta Traffic Safety Plan: Saving Lives on Alberta’s Roads* (TSP) was developed in response to the McDermid Report which provided an independent review of the various traffic safety programs of the Government of Alberta – with the aim of identifying effective approaches to changing driver habits and reducing traffic related collisions [2].

Responsibility for implementation of the TSP is with Alberta Transportation’s Office of Traffic Safety and is a shared effort amongst several ministries and a variety of key public and private non-government agencies in the province of Alberta.

The foundation of the TSP was built on best practices that show a combination of coordinated and targeted efforts in the areas of enforcement, engineering, education, communication, community mobilization, and legislative enhancements that are fundamental to reducing traffic casualties.

The TSP was driven by a three year Strategic Action Plan that outlined the activities to be undertaken in the short-term (2007-2010) as well as supporting some of the government strategic objectives, specifically to *improve Albertans’ quality of life and provide safe and secure communities* [3].

Specifically, the Traffic Safety Action Plan described strategies to:

- Develop coordinating mechanisms through the establishment of Subject Matter Groups in order that all stakeholders work cooperatively to meet provincial targets
- Determine other gaps and/or needs in research, education, surveillance, policy and infrastructure support (i.e., human, financial, information)
- Establish a performance evaluation program that indicates and confirms progress towards the identified targets
- Educate community residents and road users about the importance of traffic safety issues
- Involve Aboriginal communities (First Nations and Métis) with the goal of strengthening community action and coordination
- Develop and nurture further partnerships with other traffic safety organizations, schools, colleges, universities, health in the undertaking of traffic safety activities
- Ensure strong government commitment, including municipal and regional governments
- Include industry sectors as partners in traffic safety.

Furthermore, the Traffic Safety Action Plan identified:

- Priority topics for intervention priorities, as well as identified legislative changes
- Action items that are based on best practice to maximize positive results
- Implementation of coordinated arrangements that maximize effort
- Communication requirements, including coordination of activities at the provincial and local level
- Existing partnerships that have been created in support of traffic safety initiatives.

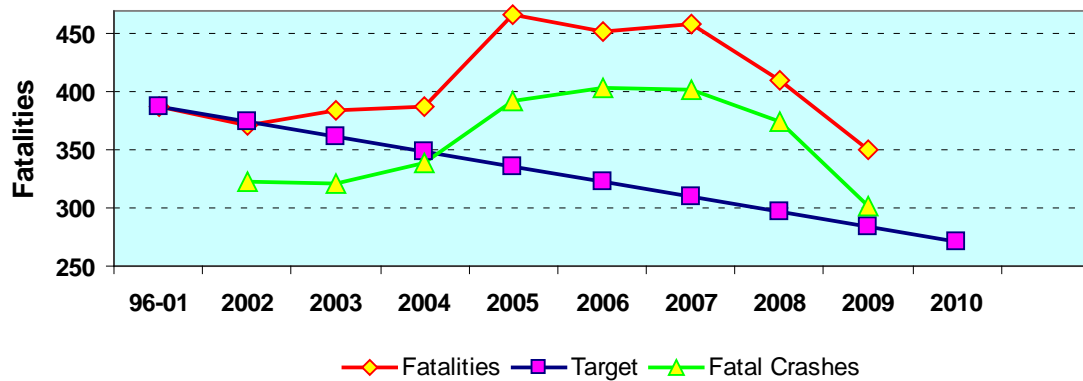
Results and Progress

Overall, deaths and injuries resulting from traffic collisions on Alberta roads in 2009 are down compared to 2008¹. To elaborate, 351 people died in 2009 in motor vehicle collisions, 59 less than in 2008 – a reduction of 14.4%. As well, 19,167 people were injured in collisions in 2009, 2,848 less than in 2008 with 332 fewer serious injuries (a reduction of 10.1%) and 2,516 fewer minor injuries (a reduction of 13.4%).

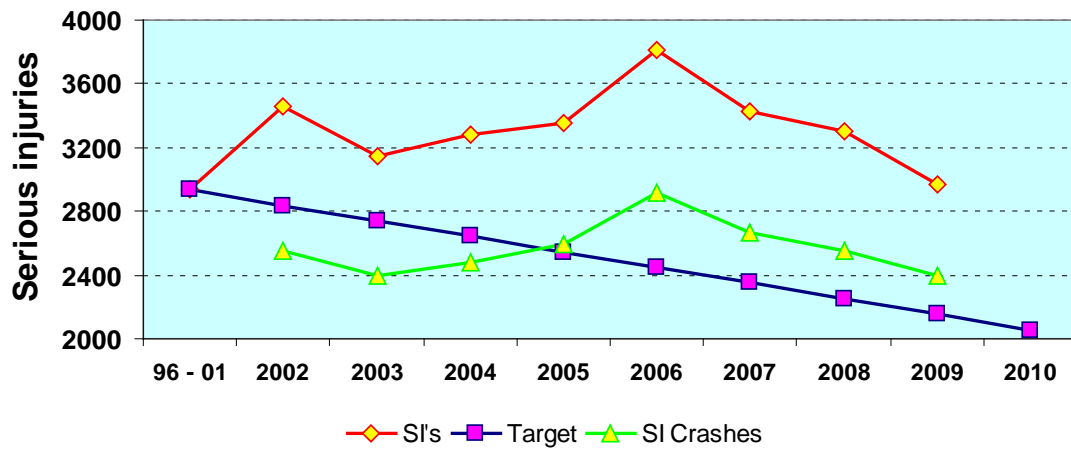
The following graphs show that since 2007, progress has been made in reducing fatalities and serious injuries on Alberta roads.

¹ For detailed information refer to the annual Alberta Traffic Collision Statistics report found at <http://www.transportation.alberta.ca/3121.htm>.

Fatalities - Alberta



Serious Injuries - Alberta



The following chart provides a picture of motor vehicle collisions in Alberta over the five-year period of 2005 – 2009 as well as targets for 2008 – 2010.

		2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	Target 2008-2010
Fatalities		466	453	458	410	351	271
Seriously injured		3349	3812	3431	3298	2966	2056
Fatalities per 100,000 population		14.3	13.4	13.2	11.4	9.5	
Fatalities per billion vehicle kilometres		10.6	10.0	9.6	8.6	7.1	

This is good news for all Alberta road users as it suggests the targeted and coordinated efforts outlined in the TSP are taking shape toward casualty reductions with positive movement towards the targets despite the fact that Alberta's population has increased over the last five years, traffic volumes for 2009 have increased by 10.92 per cent from 2005, and the number of licensed drivers increased by 12 per cent since 2005.

That said, the safety gains currently being realized from the traffic safety efforts are being continuously offset by increases in road use that come with population and economic growth. Therefore, the challenge for the next generation strategy is to balance and support Alberta's economic goals while delivering a substantial and sustained reduction in deaths and injuries.

A NEW PHILOSOPHY

Consensus is emerging across the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) that a fundamental shift in road safety management to a *Safe System Approach* is now required [4].

Several countries are currently using a *Safe System Approach* in developing and implementing their road safety programs. Sweden has developed a "Vision Zero" approach [5], the Netherlands has developed a closely related "Sustainable Safety" approach [6] and several jurisdictions in Australia are establishing similar programs.

A *Safe System Approach* encourages a better understanding of the interaction between the key elements of the road system: road users, vehicles, roads and roadsides and travel speeds. Exploring these interactions maximizes the potential advantage of initiatives in reducing deaths and injuries from linking different road safety activities.

A comprehensive *Safe System Approach* includes the following elements:

Thinking strategically

A vision of the desired state of the future founded on government's wider values and principles that sets priorities, recognizes trade-offs and describes the fit with and relationship to the strategy in other policy areas.

As well, an understanding of the current situation, trends and likely states of the future, together with their drivers and causes, and a realistic evaluation of the effectiveness of different policy instruments. Ideally, this analysis is based on a broad evidence base including economics, science, social research, and statistics placed within a context of benchmarks and international comparisons.

A strategic approach takes into account an appreciation of stakeholder views, concerns and perspectives and a plan for how they should be involved in strategy and policy development, and the role they may play in delivery.

An examination of delivery capacity, including an evaluation of the delivery system and the culture and available resources of organizations within it that highlights potential barriers to change and successful delivery is also required.

Establishing long-term goals

The next generation of road safety interventions involved further definition of road safety challenges through the enhancement or introduction of a variety of program elements including:

- Innovative interventions
- New partnerships
- Ensuring designers, planners and engineers are involved in sharing responsibility for the design, engineering, operation and maintenance of safer roads
- Ensuring road users accept and share the responsibility for safer roads through good decisions, trip planning, smarter choices and maintaining good personal health
- Aligning safety management decisions with broader transport and planning decisions
- Building on existing initiatives
- Shaping current interventions to long term goals.

Accelerating knowledge transfer

The successful transfer of knowledge is not limited to its transmission but also the absorption and ultimate use of that knowledge. Research and knowledge transfer has an essential role in the design and delivery of interventions aimed at achieving a *Safe System Approach* and in attaining results through:

- Knowledge transfer on management processes, operational best practices and interventions
- Enhanced data capturing methods
- Integrating data from multiple sources
- Research
- Innovative approaches to road safety.

Investing in road safety

Sustainable resources invested in road safety management and in safer transportation systems are required to realize the achievement of ambitious road safety targets. With this in mind, the case for road safety requires sound economic arguments in order to compete successfully for limited resources with other political and social programs.

The adoption of a *Safe System Approach* can produce important economic savings for society through:

- Reduction to the costs of collisions
- Effective interventions to increase collision reduction potential
- Building business cases
- Identifying investment priorities
- Providing additional funding and human sources.

Fostering commitment at the highest levels of government

The correct political environment is essential if road safety is to become a government priority for action. Government support for any public policy issue is always subject to

constraints including the time and resource constraints necessary for policy development and subsequent legislation.

Political support needs to be expressed in a long-term vision that addresses the public greater good, ensuring adequate funding to implement required initiatives in addition to new legislative and regulatory initiatives. This can be achieved through:

- Policy advocacy at all levels of government
- Involving politicians in the vision/strategy development
- Community mobilization and public support
- Synergy with other policy areas
- Involving the private sector
- Take advantage of growing market for road safety.

ALBERTA TRAFFIC SAFETY PLAN: A SAFE SYSTEM APPROACH TO SAVING LIVES ON ALBERTA'S ROADS (2011 – 2015)

Taking into account key learnings from the first version TSP and international best practice in order to advance the vision for road safety in Alberta, a system-wide *Safe Systems Approach* is being introduced with a focus on improving all parts of the road system that impact on safety: roads, vehicles, and road users (see Figure 1).

This approach acknowledges that serious road trauma rarely has a single cause. That said, motor vehicle collisions tend to occur when a range of factors come together at one point in time.

The aim of the *Safe System Approach* is to reduce the likelihood of various collision factors coming together to cause a collision by ensuring “five-star” road users driving “five-star” vehicles travelling on “five-star” roads at “five-star” speeds.

Although this will take time to achieve, by continually making gains in these four key areas sustained improvements in road safety will be realized. This approach acknowledges that road users make mistakes. These mistakes are mitigated through deliberately creating a system that will progressively reduce the chance of mistakes resulting in collisions. However, when collisions do occur, the *Safe System Approach* will have measures in place that significantly reduce the chance of death and serious injury through safer roads, drivers, speeds, and vehicles.

Safe Systems Approach

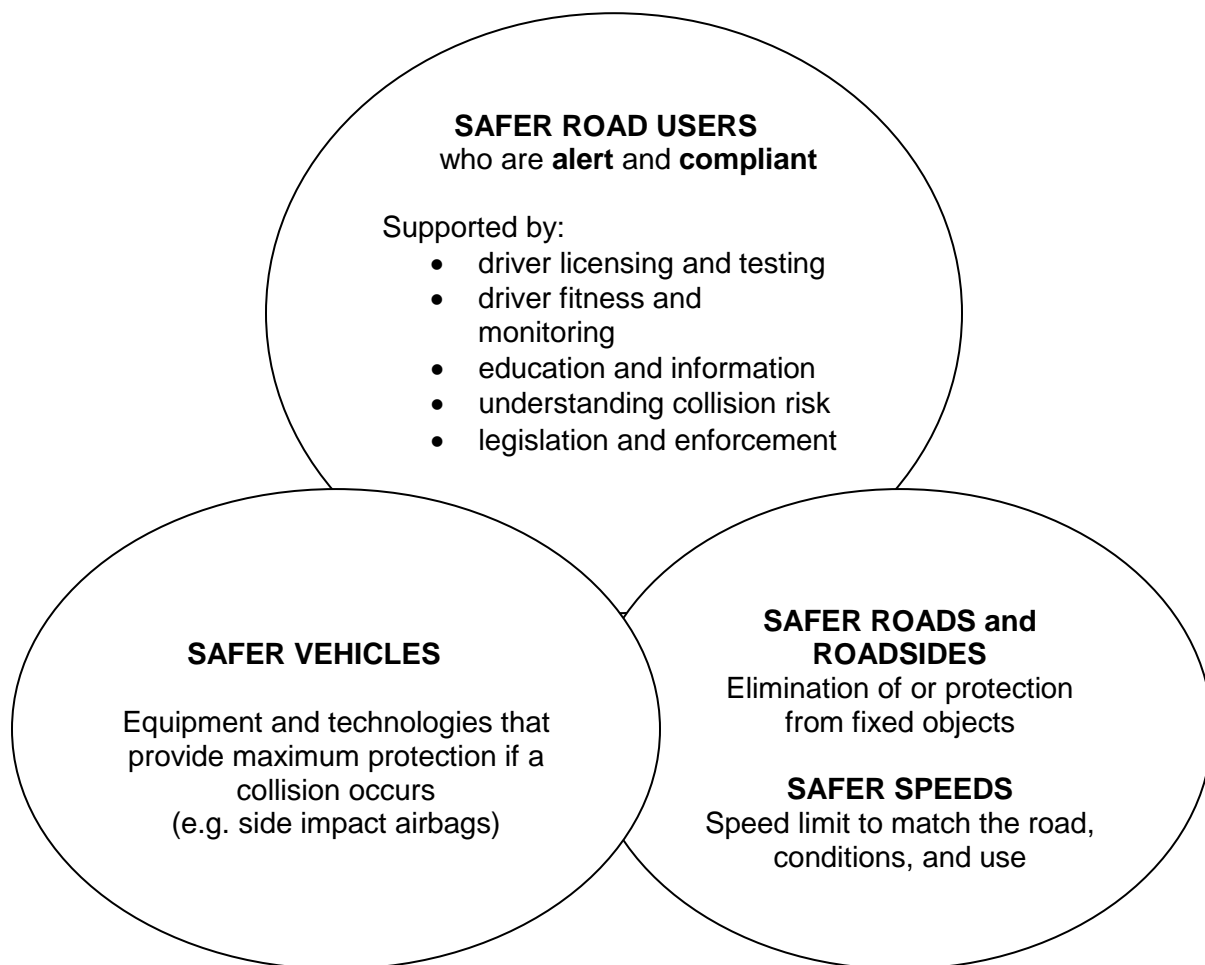


Figure 1: *Safe Systems Approach* to Road Safety

Foundational Strategies

The next generation Alberta Traffic Safety Plan will include several key foundational strategies that will be supported through annual operating plans that specify the detailed activities for that year.

Results focus

Focus will be placed on targets to ensure continuous improvement can be measured on an annual basis. As well, links to measures such as population and the amount of driving (billion kilometres driven) will be incorporated. Performance outcomes will be developed for the interventions.

Coordination

Orchestration and alignment will be provided for the interventions and other related institutional management functions delivered by government partners and related community and business partnerships to achieve the desired focus on results. New partnerships will be developed including those with the judiciary, automobile manufacturers and dealers, medical professionals and those who may have an interest in research.

Legislation, regulations and policy

New or revised legislation, regulations, and policy will be introduced and/or advanced as deemed necessary.

Innovative interventions

Innovative interventions will be researched particularly in the area of vehicle technologies. In addition, there are developing interventions in commercial vehicle safety and enforcement that will be explored.

Information technology

Focus will be placed on the need for long term funding in order to modernize mainframe systems or develop innovative solutions that support new policy and address the need for data collection, management, and analysis.

Sustainable investment

Continued emphasis will be placed on securing long-term funding in order to sustain road safety programs. This will be done in collaboration with other governments, Government of Alberta departments, and external stakeholders.

Communication and education

A key component of the next TSP will be the development of the next generation strategic communication plan to ensure continued communication of road safety.

Monitoring and evaluation

Systematic and ongoing measurement of the road safety interventions and evaluation of interventions in terms of their achieving the desired focus on results will be incorporated in the next TSP.

Research and development

In addition to continued review of leading practice in all areas of road safety, development of the next generation strategic research plan will ensure that the selected interventions are being directed to the identified priorities.

Knowledge transfer

Focus will be placed on the systematic and ongoing transfer and application of knowledge that contributes to the improved efficiency and effectiveness of the road safety management system to achieve the desired focus on results.

Community Mobilization

Elaborated in the next section of this paper, continued emphasis will be placed on empowering and strengthening and coordinating local traffic safety action and support for traffic safety networks at the community level.

Aboriginal Communities

Also elaborated in the next section of this paper, in consultation with leaders and Elders in Aboriginal communities, targeted strategies will continue to be implemented to reduce rates of traffic collisions, injuries and fatalities among Aboriginal people.

Driver Programs (Licensing, Fitness, and Monitoring)

Focus will be placed on both *compliance* and *competence*, particularly of high risk drivers. This includes driver performance, related to the aging process, deemed to be outside of the boundaries of normal driving behavior such as poor cognitive or perception skills, slow reaction time to decision-making situations, and visual or auditory limitations that may result in collisions.

Road infrastructure

Emphasis will be placed on improving the safety of roads is a particularly important component in addressing rural road collisions where higher speeds and lower road qualities contribute to increased risks of death and serious injury.

Vehicle and equipment safety

A key component of the next TSP will be periodic inspection of registered vehicles and exploration of techniques to prevent defective, road unworthy, or unsafe vehicles from using public roads.

Collaboration and Alignment with Engineers and Planners

Coordinated through the Alberta Office of Traffic Safety, an Engineering Committee has been established with the purpose of providing leadership and support in the area of road safety engineering and planning.

Since its inception in 2007, the mandate of the Engineering Committee has been the implementation of a provincial road safety engineering strategy that is aligned with the strategic objectives of the TSP.

As well, the Engineering Committee ensures that knowledge and dissemination of information is relevant, usable and understandable for the intended target audience, including municipalities and Government stakeholders.

Targets 2011-2015

Setting of targets for final outcomes, both long term and interim, to reduce death and serious injury will be paramount to the next TSP in order to provide the focus for a comprehensive road safety strategy and influence decisions about coordination needs, legislative needs, funding and resource allocation, promotion needs, monitoring and evaluation as well as research, development and knowledge transfer.

To elaborate, quantitative targets represent the road safety results which the province wishes to achieve over a given time frame. Targets have also been set for intermediate outcomes such as reduction in mean speed and increased seat belt usage to ensure closer management of the range of interventions needed to achieve final outcome targets.

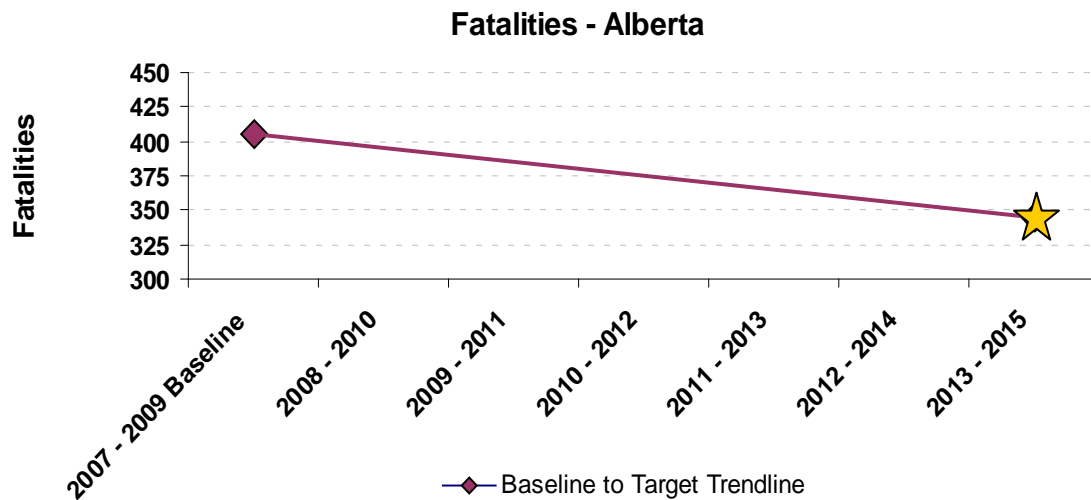
As the table and graphs below indicate, targets are based on achieving a 15% reduction in the 2013 - 2015 three year average compared to the 2007 - 2009 three year, baseline average. The actual target for fatalities and serious injuries will be based on a three year average including that year and the two years prior.

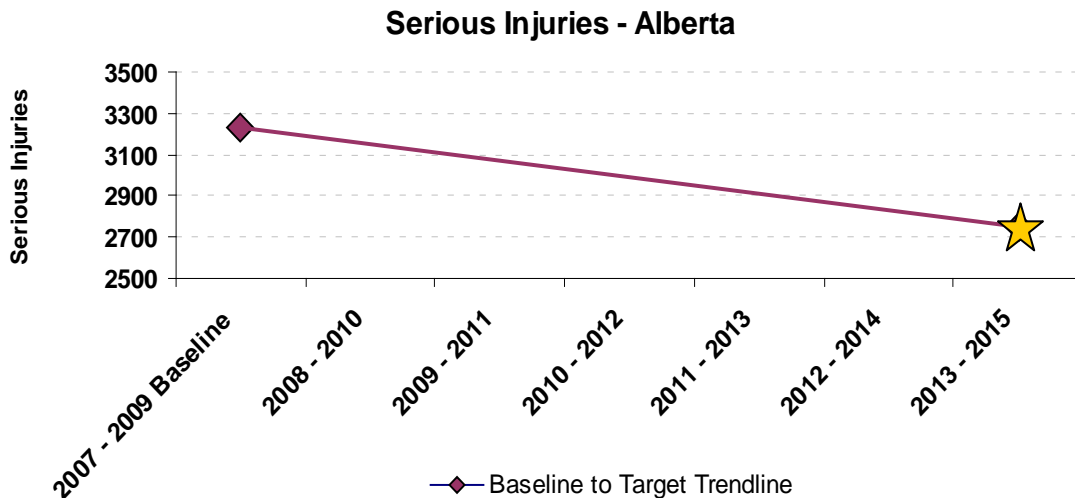
Alberta

Combined Fatal and Major Injury Collision Rates Per 100,000 Population Traffic Safety Plan Overall Target

	Baseline	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Combined Fatal and Major Injury Collision Rates Per 100,000 Population	80.8	76.6	74.7	72.7	70.8	68.8	66.8
Combined Fatal and Major Injury Collisions	2899	2827	2754	2682	2609	2537	2464

Population source: Statistics Canada.





ALBERTA TRAFFIC SAFETY PLAN COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION STRATEGY

A first in Canada, the Alberta Traffic Safety Plan Community Mobilization Strategy (Strategy) is an initiative in traffic safety that was implemented in April 2008. Based on international best practice, this Strategy provides a unique, flexible, wide-reaching approach to communication and protocols to support accountability and continuous improvement in the provision of traffic safety services at the community level.

Understanding that involving communities is a robust approach to promoting traffic safety, the Strategy provides a framework for planned, participatory processes to involve local institutions, local leaders, community groups, and members of the community to organize for collective action toward shared planning within Alberta communities.

The fundamental goal of the Strategy is to increase the capacity for shared planning within Alberta communities with respect to implementing the objectives of the TSP and aligns with the premises that:

- Shared planning requires community stakeholder and staff involvement in planning, developing, and priority setting
- Community decision making is ongoing and continuous
- Networking of relationships is paramount to success
- One-size-fits-all solutions do not effectively address community specific issues.

Development of the Strategy

Development of the Strategy was a multi-stakeholder collaborative effort involving key stakeholders including subject matter experts related to traffic safety, engineers and planners, health, Aboriginal relations, communications, injury prevention, industry, and various Government of Alberta Ministries.

To ensure stakeholder support, accountability, and commitment to continuous improvement at the community level, the Strategy was developed through several collaborative planning meetings involving key traffic safety stakeholders. Consultation and collaboration with First Nation and Métis elders, community leaders, and citizens was also viewed as key in ensuring development of community-based traffic safety strategies, tailored for each First Nation and Métis community.

Alberta's Approach to Community Mobilization

Pivotal to the success of the Strategy are flexible, wide-reaching approaches to communication and protocols that support accountability and continuous improvement in the provision of services at the community level. This community approach reflects a non-bureaucratic and collaborative method which explores community partnership alternatives to reducing traffic related injuries and death. Key to this approach is the assumption that people living within a community are best suited to address the issues.

In addition, this approach considers root causes of traffic safety challenges and opportunities specific to each region of Alberta. This allows for development of individualized strategies and alternatives to traditional traffic safety programs, achieved through development and promotion of transparent, clear, and meaningful planning efforts and community driven processes - including strategic positioning of Regional Traffic Safety Consultants throughout the province.

Evidence-based decision making serves an important role in determining what traffic safety strategies and initiatives are best suited for Alberta communities. Information for consideration in planning might include: traffic safety data analysis; literature reviews; demographic profiles; and/or conducting surveys, interviews or focus groups with clients or key stakeholders, including engineers and planners. As well, evaluation of community mobilization activities is fundamental in determining effectiveness of the activities and progress toward achievement of outcomes.

Another key component of the Strategy is the provision for funding of sustainable localized traffic safety initiatives through the *Alberta Traffic Safety Fund* – accessible by local traffic safety stakeholders to support preventative, collaborative, and focused community traffic safety projects [7].

Aboriginal Traffic Safety

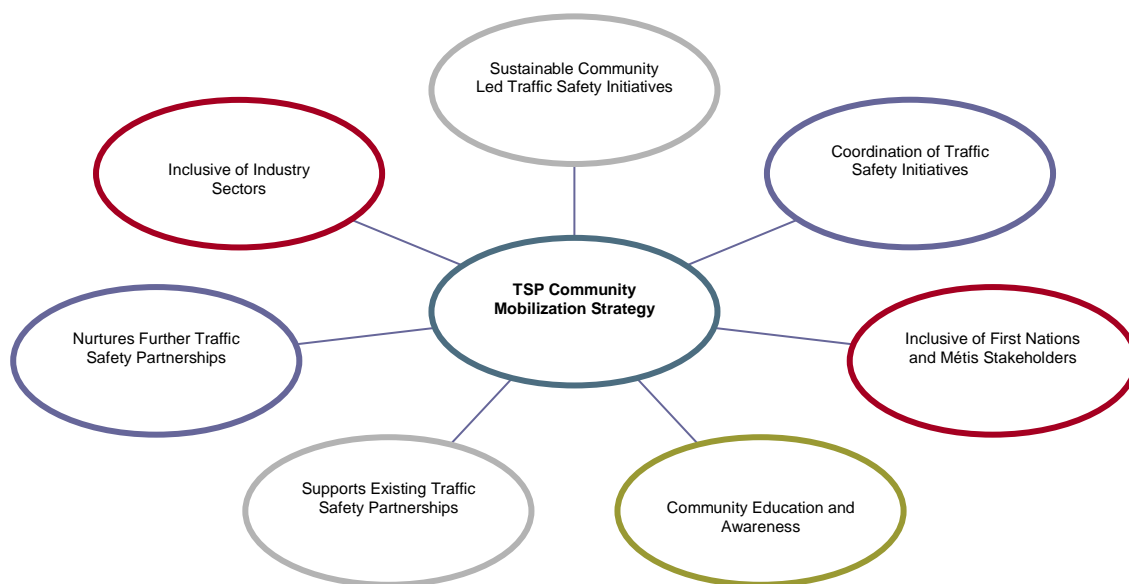
A key component of the Community Mobilization Strategy is collaboration and consultations with Métis and First Nation Elders, community leaders, federal representatives, and service providers located throughout the province to enable authentic development and implementation of community-based traffic safety strategies, tailored for each Métis and First Nation community.

To ensure the ongoing support of the greater Aboriginal community, a standing Aboriginal Advisory Committee was implemented to provide ongoing strategic guidance and to ensure effectiveness and currency of Aboriginal traffic safety approaches.

Key Focus Areas

Taken directly from the Three Year Action Plan for the TSP the Strategy is driven by Key Focus Areas (see Figure 2). To elaborate, the Strategy:

- Encourages and facilitates the development and implementation of sustainable community led initiatives to meet provincial and national targets
- Fosters coordination of traffic safety initiatives undertaken by other stakeholders such as the law enforcement community, engineers, health care providers, volunteers, and a variety of community groups
- Provides support to community groups to encourage changes in current legislation
- Involves Aboriginal communities (First Nations and Métis) with the goal of strengthening community action and coordination
- Educates and provides communication to community residents and road users about the importance of traffic safety issues
- Involves students, schools, and post-secondary institutions in the development of traffic safety activities
- Develops and nurtures further partnerships with health, public service groups, and other safety organizations in the undertaking of traffic safety activities
- Includes industry sectors as partners in traffic safety.



**Figure 2: Key Focus Areas for Alberta Traffic Safety Plan
Community Mobilization Strategy**

There are many components involved in the implementation of the Strategy including the contracting of Regional Traffic Safety Consultants, development of Regional Traffic Safety Committees, and determining local traffic safety priorities and action plans.

Currently there are fourteen (14) Regional Traffic Safety Consultants (Consultants), located throughout Alberta tasked with initiating, coordinating, and integrating regional and local community support for the TSP. Consultants facilitate the development of Regional Traffic Safety Committees, assist with identification of local traffic safety issues, and link local and regional initiatives with provincial initiatives.

Consultants also:

- Organize regional response to provincial traffic safety campaigns
- Facilitate the development of community partnerships between stakeholders
- Assess and respond to community needs and issues with respect to traffic safety and inform the community about the Alberta Traffic Safety Plan
- Investigate and coordinate traffic safety funding opportunities
- Establish media relations and coordinate media activities
- Develop and coordinate communication initiatives related to traffic safety projects and initiatives being undertaken with the community
- Organize public information meetings and groups and provide follow-up communication related to traffic safety projects
- Network with local road authorities through established protocols for engineering related concerns or requests within a community.

Collaboration and Alignment with Engineers and Planners

With the implementation of the Strategy occasional, yet significant instances arose where Consultants and engineers and / or planners were pitted against each other by municipal leaders and/or staff; especially when initial engineering decisions resulted in these communities not receiving the traffic safety solutions sought.

In response, a strategic protocol for addressing community concerns regarding engineering decisions and practices was developed and implemented which encompasses these 'engineering related' matters:

- Highway operations
- Highway maintenance
- Highway geometrics
- Planning
- Traffic engineering
- Intelligent Transportation Systems.

Results and Progress

Since the inception of the Strategy in April 2008 and up to and including March 31, 2011:

- 64 Traffic Safety Committees / Networks are in place province-wide responsible for coordinating, initiating, and integrating regional and local support for the TSP
- Consultants organized and conducted over 2200 Public Information Meetings bringing awareness of the TSP, the Strategy, and traffic safety areas of focus to various organizations, community partners, and traffic safety stakeholders
- In addition to the provincial media and awareness activities outlined in the Alberta Office of Traffic Safety Communications Plan, Consultants negotiated and conducted approximately 1650 media contacts with local, community media outlets
- Local traffic safety awareness and education was raised and relationships built through 165 public tradeshow
- All Consultants have become Child Restraint System Technicians and one is a Certified Instructor having conducted 42 child restraint system training sessions (mostly to enforcement partners) and over 300 child restraint system clinics
- Consultants have coordinated and/or participated in 312 Joint Forces Events with enforcement partners
- Consultants were integral in planning more than 185 traffic safety events including youth conferences and events, seniors transportation planning sessions, off-highway vehicle safety events, and mock collisions scenes.

Evaluating Community Mobilization Efforts

Despite community mobilization gaining popularity internationally, evaluation strategies have not kept up with the level of development and refinement the programs themselves. As a result, there are few programs in traffic safety for which an evaluation of the Strategy can take direction.

Furthermore, as previously noted, the Alberta Traffic Safety Plan Community Mobilization Strategy is unprecedented in Canada and as a result, there are few programs in traffic safety after which an evaluation of the Strategy can be modeled. In order to explore an interim as well as long-term evaluation plan, Alberta Transportation struck an ad hoc project team in 2010 to develop a Community Mobilization Evaluation Framework (Framework) that would allow for evaluation of the Strategy through a combination of stand-alone evaluation approaches.

The intent of the Framework is to ensure the Strategy is evaluated in terms of context, processes, outputs, outcomes, and impacts.

As reflected in the *Results and Progress* section above, the outputs of the Strategy are available presently. The longer term evaluation, expected to be completed in late 2012 or early 2013 will incorporate aspects of context, outcome, process, and impact evaluation [8].

Challenges and Opportunities

Although community mobilization was identified in the TSP as a key strategy to build capacity and affect changes in attitudes and behaviours related to traffic safety, the overall TSP targets cannot be achieved without substantive behaviour change on the part of drivers, passengers and other road users.

Furthermore, there is a complex interplay of community and social factors that contribute to road user behavior. These factors include but are not limited to geographical areas (urban, rural, remote), economic and employment activities, roadway planning, housing layouts, family structures, and enforcement practices [9].

With just over three years since the launch of the Strategy, it is understood that mobilizing Alberta communities is an ongoing process, expected to evolve over time and gain further momentum in communities throughout Alberta.

Moreover, although good progress has been made thus far, communities need to continue to evolve and define their traffic safety needs and balance these needs with available resources. Ideally, these community efforts will become self-sustaining over time as the community as a whole sees the value in improving and promoting traffic safety.

SUMMARY

The Government of Alberta tackled the challenge of improving traffic safety through developing and implementing a made-in-Alberta Traffic Safety Plan.

Launched in 2006, the *Alberta Traffic Safety Plan: Saving Lives on Alberta's Roads* was a comprehensive strategy designed to address the individual, community, and societal implications of the approximately 400 *preventable* fatalities and 23,000 injuries that occur in Alberta every year resulting from traffic collisions.

Under the leadership of Alberta Transportation's Office of Traffic Safety, the Alberta Traffic Safety Plan and the Alberta Traffic Safety Plan Community Mobilization Strategy represent the unprecedented combined efforts of stakeholder groups and government departments, united to coordinate all inclusive approaches including education, awareness, community mobilization, engineering, and enforcement to effect reductions in traffic crashes, an increase in public awareness of traffic safety, and positive changes in driver habits.

Building on this success, the Government of Alberta is about to release a successor plan which will be guided by the *Safe Systems Approach*. Alberta's new approach to road safety improvement will make the road transport system more forgiving of human error and minimize the level of unsafe road user behaviour.

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ⁱ Much of the information and research for this paper was provided and/or compiled by the Canadian Traffic Safety Institute, Burnaby British Columbia.