



Communication Plan for the Safe Streets for All (SS4A) Project

Communicating with partners to improve collaboration and coordination to reduce traffic fatalities and make streets safer for everyone.

June 2024

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

The following is a list of acronyms used throughout this document.

FHWA: Federal Highway Administration

HIC: High Injury Corridors

HII: High Injury Intersections

JPACT: Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation

MPO: Metropolitan Planning Organization

ODOT: Oregon Department of Transportation

RTP: Regional Transportation Plan

RTSS: Regional Transportation Safety Strategy

SRTS: Safe Routes to School

SS4A: Safe Streets for All

TPAC: Transportation Policy Alternative Committee

TSAP: Transportation Safety Action Plan

1. PURPOSE

Metro received a federal [Safe Streets for All grant](#) in 2023 to develop regional safety program activities in 2024-2025 and support implementation of the 2023 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and the [Regional Transportation Safety Strategy](#) (RTSS). This Communication Plan describes how Metro staff working on the grant funded Safe Streets for All (SS4A) project will communicate internally with other Metro projects and programs and with external jurisdictional and community partners. The Communication Plan will be used by Metro staff and jurisdictional and community partners to coordinate and partner on messaging and communication activities.

Clear communication with and between jurisdictional and community partners is essential to developing useful safety data, information, and strategies, and effectively coordinating safety activities to make progress towards reducing traffic deaths and serious injuries and making roadways safe and welcoming to everyone.

Part of the SS4A grant provides funding for Washington County, the City of Tigard and Multnomah County and the cities of East Multnomah County to develop local Transportation Safety Action Plans (TSAPs). These plans will be finalized at the end of 2025. Metro will coordinate with these partners as they develop the TSAPs and many of the communication activities described in this plan are intended to support their local processes.

Metro’s portion of the grant funds will further develop the regional transportation safety program known as the Safe Streets for All (SS4A) program and support implementation of strategies and actions in the RTSS which was adopted by the Metro Council and the Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation (JPACT) in 2018.



Metro SS4A project activities include:

- enhancing and standardizing a set of annually updated safety data outputs for use by local jurisdictions and other partners;
- building shared messaging around safety challenges and solutions;
- and coordinating with regional partners to implement safety strategies more effectively.

2. APPROACH, OBJECTIVES AND DESIRED OUTCOMES

The greater Portland region is experiencing an increase in traffic deaths as seen across the United States and in Oregon. These challenges reflect systemic issues impacting communities large and small, but that disproportionately impact lower income and communities of color.

The multifaceted nature of traffic safety challenges is daunting, and it is therefore crucial that transportation agencies and communities tackle them collectively and strategically, with a sense of shared purpose and unwavering commitment to eliminating traffic-related deaths and serious injuries. This section describes Metro’s communication approach, objectives, and desired outcomes for the SS4A project.

Approach

Metro SS4A project communication and materials are guided by a positive culture framework and collaborative approach.

Collaborative

Metro’s approach to communication is grounded in collaboration. Metro does not own or operate roadways; it is important that messaging, activities, and strategies are developed in collaboration with jurisdictional partners, non-governmental organizations, and communities.

Positive Culture Framework

Use elements of the [Positive Culture Framework](#) developed by Jay Otto at the Center for Health and Safety Culture to frame messaging of safety data and strategies. Positive Culture framing is grounded in an understanding that a sense of hope (in communities, in agencies, in decision-makers, etc.) is essential to improve safety outcomes. Hope is defined as “the perceived capability to derive pathways to desired goals and motivate oneself via agency thinking to use those pathways.”¹ The Positive Culture Framework seeks to grow existing positive shared values and beliefs, which support health and safety, rather than using a fear-based approach.

Communication Objectives

The primary communication objectives of the SS4A project are defined below. Communication is primarily focused on working with jurisdictional, non-governmental organizations, and other community partners involved in roadway safety, to advance adopted safety plans and policies. Broader public engagement around safety topics is provided through the regional transportation planning (RTP) process. However, interested members of the public are welcome to participate in activities described in this plan, and materials produced through the project will be available to the public on the SS4A Metro website.

¹ Snyder, C.R. (2002) Hope Theory: Rainbows in the Mind. *Psychological Inquiry*, 13(4), 249-275.

Sharing information amongst partners

Jurisdictional and other partners engaged in the work learn from each other and share concerns, issues, needs and ideas.

Relationship building

Build a community of practice that is supportive and fosters trust and familiarity around issues and solutions.

Information and idea gathering

Proactively seek and encourage input from jurisdictional and other partners engaged in the project.

Building understanding and awareness

Foster deeper comprehension of the issues, needs, options and/or desired outcomes.

Capacity building

Work toward a more informed, engaged community, especially around the Safe Systems Approach.

The SS4A project benefits from and is responsive to the extensive public engagement for the 2023 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) where safety was identified as core concern and high priority. Work products from the SS4A project will be used in the 2028 update of the RTP and will be included in materials shared with the public during official public engagement periods and activities for that planning process.

Desired Outcomes

In implementing the SS4A project, the process is as important as the products. Progress towards safety goals and outcomes will require building buy in to make real, lasting change and includes developing relationships and integrating the input of jurisdictional and other partners.

These desired outcomes will take time to achieve. Metro's SS4A project and communication activities will use these outcomes to guide decisions. These outcomes have been identified in multiple Safe Systems plans and strategies, in particular the [ITE Road to Zero Safe Systems Strategic Plan](#).

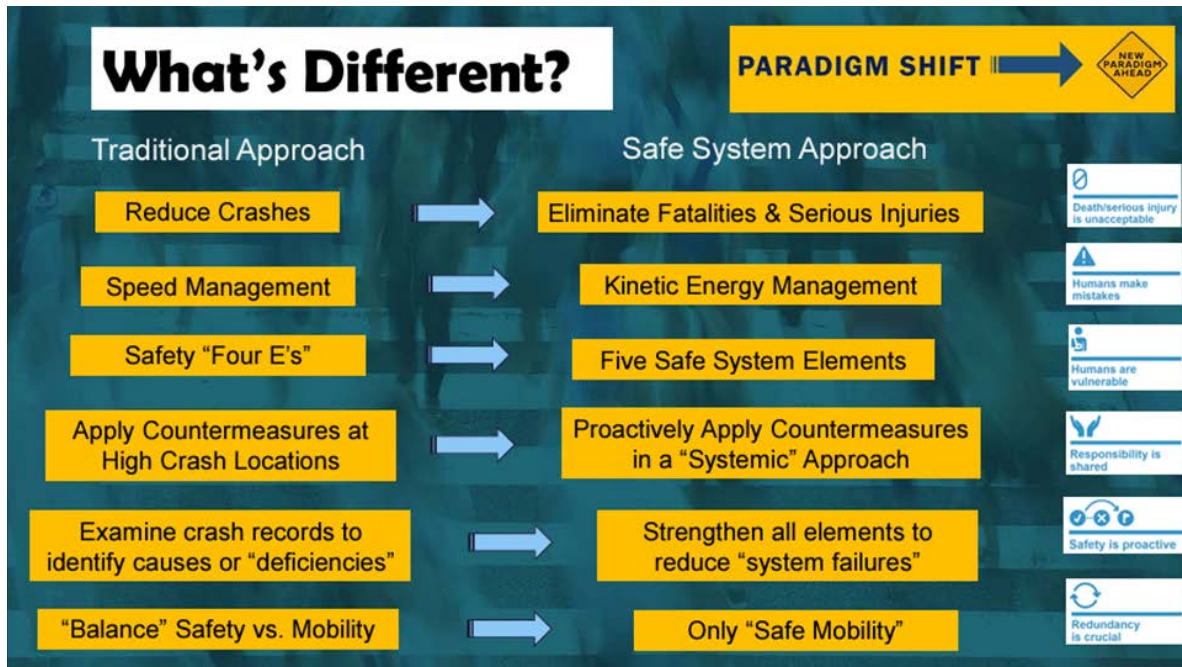
Increased knowledge and acceptance of the Safe System approach

Changing mindset is focused on awareness building of safety culture and the Safe System Approach, and how they link to the goal of zero fatalities. It also seeks to create buy-in to the Safe Systems principles that humans make mistakes and human bodies are fragile. Resources such as the [Safe Systems Explanation](#) and [Safe Systems Framework](#), provide a basic understanding of Safe Systems concepts.

A belief that change is possible

Jurisdictional and community partners agree that a paradigm shift is needed. They share that they are confident that it is possible to shift the paradigm, use the Safe System approach, and eliminate serious traffic crashes.

Figure 1 Shifting from a traditional to Safe System approach



Source: FHWA

Organizational traffic safety culture

Jurisdictional and community partners can define shared values, actions, and behaviors that demonstrate a commitment to safety over competing goals and demands. Safety is not seen as a trade-off that must be 'balanced' with other needs such as mobility. Safe mobility with zero traffic deaths and serious injuries is the priority.

Transportation agencies proactively elevate road safety as a priority for their employees. Agencies embrace safety and make a commitment to integrate safety in all aspects of transportation programs and projects. Employees have the Safe System approach in mind when planning, scoping, designing, and constructing a road. Employees regularly communicate the importance of road safety with colleagues, customers, and contractors. Executive leaders are vocal supporters of safety and empower employees to seek innovative approaches to improving. Learn more here: <https://highways.dot.gov/safety/zero-deaths/safety-culture>

Changing practice

Transportation professionals responsible for the planning, design, operation, and other aspects of the road system have the information and tools to make decisions based on the Safe System

approach. Roadway authorities use new and proven safety countermeasures, apply the Safe System approach and design hierarchy, and prioritize safety in all transportation projects.

Committed leadership

Elected officials, decision-makers and community leaders in the region have a shared understanding of safety challenges and agreement of which solutions to prioritize. Leaders committed to change, who have a clear and shared vision of what can be done, who can do it, when and how, and that understand and support the Safe System approach and safety goals is critical to making progress.

3. PARTNERS IN COLLABORATIVE COMMUNICATION

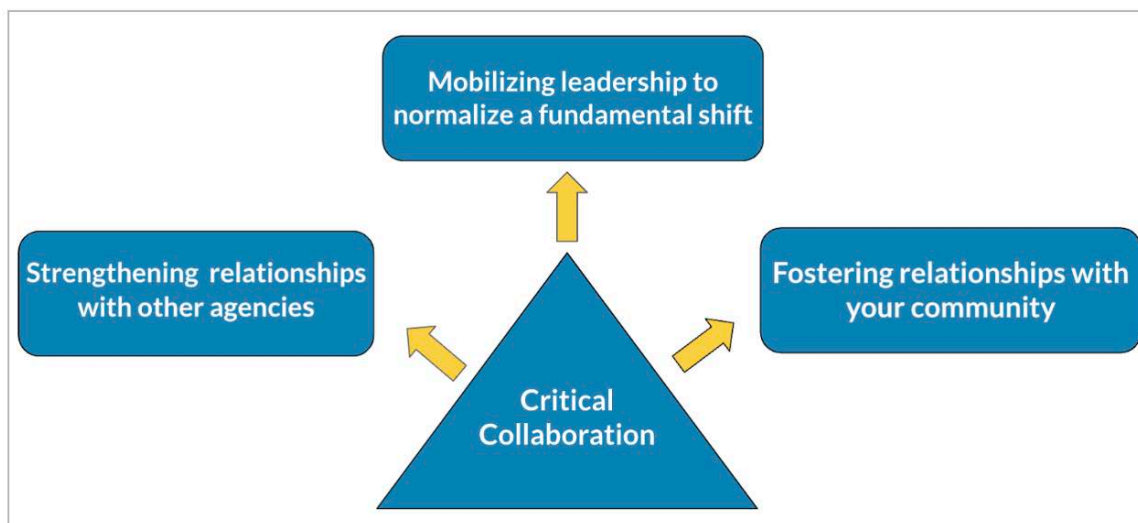
In implementing the SS4A project, the process is as important as the products. Progress towards safety goals and outcomes will require building buy in to make real, lasting change and includes developing relationships and seeking and integrating the input of jurisdictional, community and other partners.

The SS4A project provides an opportunity to recognize and break down traditional silos. Given that transportation decisions intersect with so many consequential aspects of life, including access to jobs, education, food, and other critical destinations to opportunities that influence health and well-being, the range of people, communities and organizations who should be collaborators is broad.

Political buy-in can advance safety through changes in policy and institutional practices, such as issuing executive orders or initiating pledges to support safety plans. However, these positions may experience turnover due to changes in administration and election cycles. Therefore, individual agencies should consider establishing provisions that establish continuity of transportation safety programs and culture. When leaders or stakeholders depart, their replacements should be engaged in the process as soon as possible.

As shown in the figure below, effective collaboration includes strengthening relationships with other agencies (transportation, land use, transit, public health, community development, etc.); mobilizes leadership to normalize a fundamental shift in the way agencies, communities, and the public think about safety; and ongoing relationship building with communities.

Figure 2 Three pillars of collaboration in Vision Zero action planning



Source: Vision Zero Network

Partners in collaboration

- **Community leaders, elected officials, and decision makers:** individuals who champion and prioritize safety in decision making, including Metro Councilors, members of JPACT, executive leaders of non-governmental organizations, and business leaders.
- **Jurisdictional, agency, and transportation professional partners working on roadway safety:** individuals who work in safety and represent agencies or organizations or businesses that impact safety, including city and county staff, engineers, planners, public health professionals, transit professionals, safety educators, emergency responders and law enforcement.
- **Other partners whose work aligns with and intersects with roadway safety:**
 - Housing and land use development, linking land use patterns to the function of roadways, and to help address concerns about communities who may be at risk for gentrification and displacement.
 - Environmental justice, to identify areas of overlap between transportation policies and environmental justice needs.
 - Public health organizations and providers.
 - Transit agencies and providers.
- **Representatives from impacted communities:** those disproportionately impacted by roadway safety problems, often people with a disability, and people living in low-income neighborhoods and communities of color.
- **Youth:** who are over-represented in traffic deaths but rarely consulted in transportation decision-making.
- **Advocates and community-based organizations:** to represent the most at-risk road users, such as people walking and biking and people with disabilities.

4. MESSAGING

This section summarizes high-level messages that are at the core of communications for the SS4A project. Staff and partners working on the SS4A will refer to this section when developing presentations, key messages, talking points, and other communication materials to ensure that messages are consistent and on point and that the most important points continue to be elevated.

Equity - acknowledge past harms and disproportionate impacts

We cannot achieve the goal of zero deaths and serious injuries without changing the systems that result in disproportionate traffic deaths and safety risks for some, particularly people with disabilities, people with low-income and Black, Indigenous, Hispanic, Native American, and other communities of color. Decision-makers, roadway safety professionals and advocates are responsible for recognizing and addressing the equity disparities evidenced in data.

Actionable steps include:

- Acknowledge past harms.
- Operationalize and institutionalize equity in roadway safety planning and decision making.
- Establish and nurture collaborative relationships.
- Lead with equity in analysis and prioritization.
- Use the Safe System approach based on effective and equitable strategies.
- Track and share progress of equity commitments.

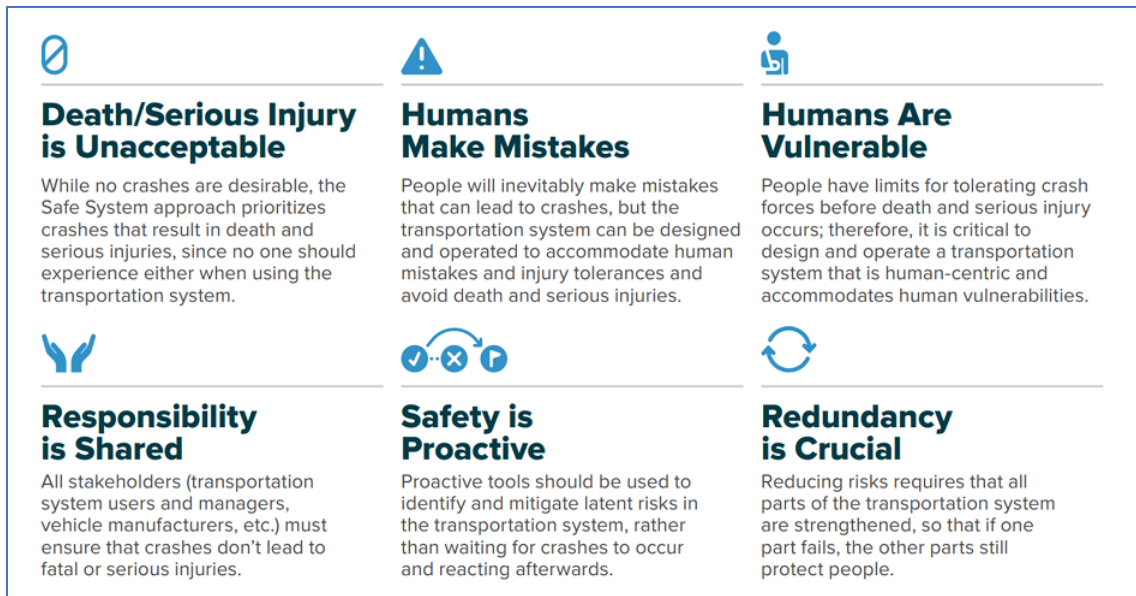
More information: <https://visionzeronetWORK.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Prioritizing Health Equit in Vision Zero Planning.pdf>

Safe System approach – effective and proven

The Safe System approach and zero deaths vision is effective and proven. The Safe System approach is human-centered and achieves safety through a more aggressive use of vehicle or roadway design and operational changes rather than relying primarily on behavioral changes, and by fully integrating the needs of all users (pedestrians, bicyclists, older, younger, people with disabilities, etc.) of the transportation system.

The Safe System approach is founded on the six principles illustrated in the figure below.

Figure 3 Foundational principles of the Safe System approach



Source: FHWA

Changing scale – coordinated, systemwide actions

Systemic changes are needed to achieve the goal of zero fatalities and serious injuries. The Safe System approach is more than individual actions: it is a coordinated set of strategies carried out by the many players responsible for delivering safe transportation systems at system wide scales (e.g. reducing posted speed limits city wide to 25 mph; adding enhanced pedestrian crossings at every bus stop). This approach starts by embracing the five elements of the Safe System (safe people, safe speeds, safe streets, safe vehicles, plus post-care response) and working together to create a mutually reinforcing safety net. Achieving this safety net includes embracing a safety culture within organizations and communities, and moves to adopting systems thinking, programs, and practices by those responsible for the different elements and principles of the Safe System approach.

Figure 4 Safe System elements



Intersection of safe streets and public health – prevention goes beyond the individual

While we all have a role in creating a safe transportation system, our focus should be on making changes that have systemic and wide impacts. This requires consistently taking a proactive approach to traffic safety and implementing interventions that will stop serious crashes from occurring in the first place. Street design and system operation are critical to preventing fatal and serious traffic injuries. To effectively eliminate serious injury crashes, there is also a need to address contextual factors such as housing, mental and behavioral health, substance abuse, and cost of living.

Figure 5 An upstream public health approach to preventing serious traffic injuries



Source: BCCDC Foundation for Population and Public Health

Intersection with personal security

Safe streets go beyond traditional traffic safety investments and include supporting personal safety and a sense of belonging. We need streets where people feel safe from traffic violence and feel free from the threat and fear of emotional, psychological, and physical harm. To reach racial justice commitments, climate goals, and zero serious traffic injuries we must ensure that everyone feels safe traveling and occupying public spaces.

5. COMMUNICATION TOPICS, TIMELINE, AND TOOLS

This section describes the topics that will be the focus of communication activities, communication tools that Metro will develop and use, and the SS4A project phases and timing.

Topics

A range of roadway safety topics have been identified through planning and past public engagement, especially for the Regional Transportation Plan, which will benefit from deeper communication and focus.

- Applying the Safe System approach and design hierarchy to plans, policies and projects
- Using a data driven approach to understand the scale and type of safety problems
- Prioritizing effective, implementable strategies and actions
- Coalescing leadership around priority actions for the region
- Aligning projects and programs with the Safe System approach
- Identifying demonstration and quick build projects for future funding
- Addressing barriers to implementing safety projects, including funding, maintenance, resistance to change, vehicle throughput

Project phases and milestones

The following chart and table provide a timeline and describes the SS4A project phases, milestones, and communication goals for each project phase. The SS4A project is divided into four, six-month phases.

Figure 6 Project Phases

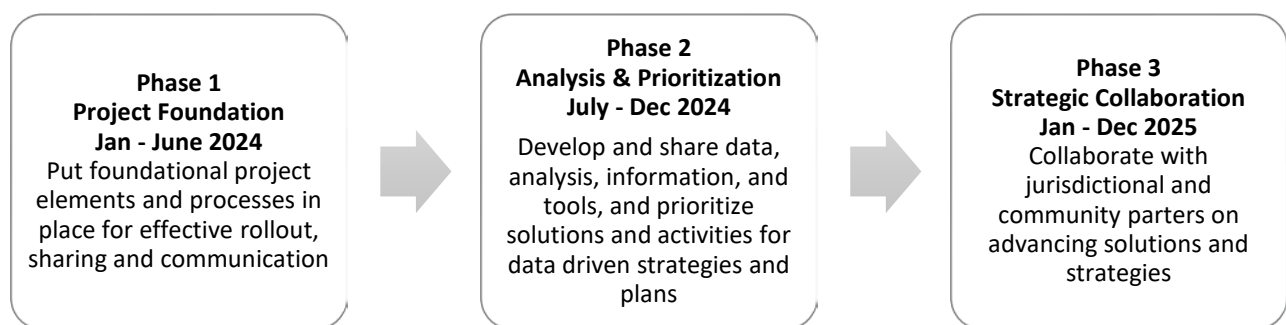


Table 1 Project Phases, Milestones, and Communication Goals

Phase	Milestones	Communication Goals
Phase 1: Project Foundation Jan - June 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Assemble project team ○ Develop communication plan ○ Define data and analysis needs ○ Create local HIC tools and data ○ Assemble crash, traffic, roadway, demographic, and other data ○ Create data management process ○ Identify speed data options ○ Create public data analysis sharing platform ○ Design and launch webpage ○ Initiate social media pilot 	<p>Project partners understand project objectives and activities.</p>
Phase 2: Data, Analysis, & Activities July-Dec 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Initiate bi-monthly topical regional safe streets forums and work groups ○ Conduct in-depth analysis of contributing factors to serious crashes, with a focus on pedestrian crashes ○ Launch data analysis sharing platform ○ Prioritize Safe System solutions, strategies and actions using Safe System design hierarchy, Spectrum of Prevention and RCVE analysis ○ Work with project partners to identify pedestrian safety demonstration projects for funding opportunities ○ Develop legislative concepts ○ Produce annual safety report ○ Provide updates to Metro committees 	<p>Project partners understand factors contributing to serious and pedestrian crashes and opportunities to advance systemic solutions.</p>
Phase 3: Strategic Collaboration Jan-Dec 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continue bi-monthly topical regional safe streets forums and work groups ○ Update data and analysis, webpage and data sharing platforms ○ Produce annual safety report ○ Assess 2023 RTP projects for alignment with Safe System approach ○ Pilot macro-level crash prediction model ○ Draft updates to Regional Transportation Safety Strategy for incorporation into 2028 RTP ○ Provide updates to Metro committees 	<p>Project partners have shared agreement and understanding of the most effective systemic solutions to advance and how to advance.</p>

Communication tools and activities

This section describes the tools that Metro will use to communicate and share information, the target audiences, and the project phase where the tools will be used. Detailed workplans or outlines will be developed for some of the communication tools.

Table 2 Communication Tools

Communication Tool	Description and activities	Target audience	Project Phase
Research and scoping	Conduct and share research of current and best practices to develop data analysis approach, data distribution plan, effective use of data dashboards, effective strategies, and effective communication approaches.	Project staff, practitioners, subject experts	Phase 1-3
Surveys, polls, and interviews	Use surveys, polls, and interviews to gather information as needed to inform project goals and decisions such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local data and analysis needs • Level of understanding and use of the Safe Systems Approach • Development of SS4A demonstration project(s) • Development of strategies 	Jurisdictional partners, advocates, practitioners, subject experts	Phase 1-2
SS4A Tools and Guides webpage on Metro website	Create a new webpage under Tools and Guides. This webpage will serve as an information and resource hub for the public and jurisdictional and other partners working in roadway safety. The webpage will include the following elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High Injury Corridors (HIC) StoryMap describing regional and local high injury corridors and intersections, data layers of the HICs • Strategies and countermeasures • Links to safety data • Safety stories • Links to plans and strategies • Project update email option 	Public, jurisdictional and community, partners, advocates	Created in Phase 1, updated over time
Data sharing platform	Share safety data and analysis on a publicly accessible platform. Data updated at least annually.	Public, jurisdictional and community partners	Created in Phase 2, updated over time
Emailed project updates	Provide quarterly project email updates, or as needed, via email	Interested parties email list,	Phase 2-3

Communication Tool	Description and activities	Target audience	Project Phase
		jurisdictional partners, Metro Council, Metro committees	
Talking points	Develop talking points to promote concepts of the Safe System Approach and Safety Culture through a variety of media	Elected and community leaders, safety advocates, staff	Ongoing
Internal communications	Provide periodic updates to other teams, Council staff, and legislative coordinators on items that require coordination	Council Policy Coordinators, other project leads and teams, legislative coordinators	Ongoing, assess quarterly
Updates to Metro committees	Provide an annual update on the SS4A project to the Metro Council, JPACT TPAC, and MTAC	Elected officials, decision makers, agency staff, community representatives	At least annually, Phase 2- 3
Social media	Post weekly on safety related topics from May-November (pilot), including sharing posts from jurisdictional and community partners	Public, elected officials, jurisdictional partners, advocates	Phase 1-3
Regional Safe Streets Forum and working groups	<p>Convene a bi-monthly safe streets forums on a variety of topics, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High injury corridors • Safe System design hierarchy • Speed setting best practices • Contributing factors to serious crashes, pedestrian crashes • Effective safety countermeasures • Prioritizing strategies and actions • Maintenance of safety projects • Contributing factors to serious crashes/ crash analysis studio • Maintenance workers forum • Advocacy roundtable • Safety Summit (coordinated with RTC) 	Transportation professionals, jurisdictional partners, advocates	Phase 2-3
Ad-hoc technical	Convene ad-hoc technical issue working groups to work through technical data issues, provide input on strategies and	Jurisdictional partners, technical	Phase 2-3

Communication Tool	Description and activities	Target audience	Project Phase
working group meetings	problem solving on various topics. Participants will be driven by topics.	experts, community partners	
Hosted on-demand webinars and trainings	Host recorded webinars and trainings with opportunity to discuss application in the region. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road Safety Fundamentals: A 10-Part ITE Learning Hub Webinar Series On-Demand • FHWA trainings • ARCGIS live 	Transportation professionals, jurisdictional partners, advocates and community partners	Phase 2-3
Best practice site tour(s), safety audit	Tour of safety issues and/or roadway safety countermeasures in the region with featured speakers and possible workshop or charette. Sites TBD with jurisdictional and community partners.	Jurisdictional and community partners; practitioners	Phase 2, 3

RESOURCES

This section lists resources used to develop the SS4A Communication Plan and that may be used to implement it.

Communication and framing resources

- Positive Culture Framework
<https://chsculture.org/positive-culture-framework/>
- Metro Inclusive Style Guide
https://metronet.oregonmetro.gov/services/Documents/Communications/Metro%20inclusive%20language%20style%20guide_test.pdf
- A Safe System Guide for Transportation: Sharing this Approach to Lead Your Community to Action, November 2023
<https://aaafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/202311-AAAFTS-Safe-System-Approach.pdf>
- Metro Community Engagement Best Practices Guide, August 2011
https://metronet.oregonmetro.gov/services/Documents/Communications/metro_public_engagement_guide_12-28-11.pdf
- Vision Zero Network, From Planning to Practice: The Role of Collaboration in Vision Zero Planning, May 2023
<https://visionzeronet.org/from-planning-to-practice-the-role-of-collaboration-in-vision-zero-planning/>
- Prevention Institute, Spectrum of Prevention
<https://www.preventioninstitute.org/tools/spectrum-prevention-0>

Messaging content resources

- Safe Systems Strategic Plan
https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/zerodeaths/docs/FHWA-SA-21-088_Safe_System_Strategic_Plan.pdf
- ITE Safe Systems Explanation Fact Sheet, November 2019
<https://www.ite.org/pub/?id=C8BC23F8-C95C-4DE6-7E79-30B7A1E3B38D>
- FHWA Zero Deaths and Safe System
<https://highways.dot.gov/safety/zero-deaths>

A webpage developed by the Road to Zero Coalition and members of the RTZ Safe System

- FHWA Road to Zero Safe System Strategic Plan
https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/zerodeaths/docs/FHWA-SA-21-088_Safe_System_Strategic_Plan.pdf
- ITE Safe System Resources
<https://www.ite.org/technical-resources/topics/safe-systems/>
- City of Portland, Beyond Traffic Safety: Building community belonging and safety in public spaces, April 2024

Other resources

- Prioritizing Health Equity in Vision Zero Planning. Visio Zero Network (September 2023):
https://visionzeronetwrok.org/wpcontent/uploads/2023/09/Prioritizing_Health_Equit_in_Vision_Zero_Planning.pdf
- FHWA, Transportation Safety Planning and the Zero Deaths Vision: A Guide for Metropolitan Planning Organizations and Local Communities, August 2018
https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/tsp/fhwasa18024/MPOLocalSafetyPlanGuide_508compliant.pdf

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