VT Agency of Transportation:
Safe System Approach

Chittenden County RPC Transportation Advisory Committee – October 7, 2025
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What is a Safe System Approach?

- It recognizes that the transportation network and system is both large and complex.
- It works by building and reinforcing multiple layers of protection to help prevent crashes from happening and minimize harm to those involved when crashes do occur.
- Promotes a safety program with a focus on infrastructure, human behavior, responsible oversight of the vehicle and transportation industry, and emergency response.

Safe Systems Approach - Principles

1. Death And Serious Injuries Are Unacceptable
   - Prioritize the elimination of crashes that result in death and serious injuries.
2. Humans Make Mistakes
   - Transportation system designed and operated to accommodate certain types and levels of human mistakes.
3. Humans Are Vulnerable
   - Transportation systems designed and operated to be human centric and accommodate physical human vulnerabilities.
4. Responsibility Is Shared
5. Safety Is Proactive
6. Redundancy Is Crucial
   - Transportation system designed and operated so that if one part fails, the other parts will provide protection.

Safe System Approach - Objectives

1. Safer People
2. Safer Roads
3. Safer Speeds
4. Safer Vehicles
5. Post-Crash Care

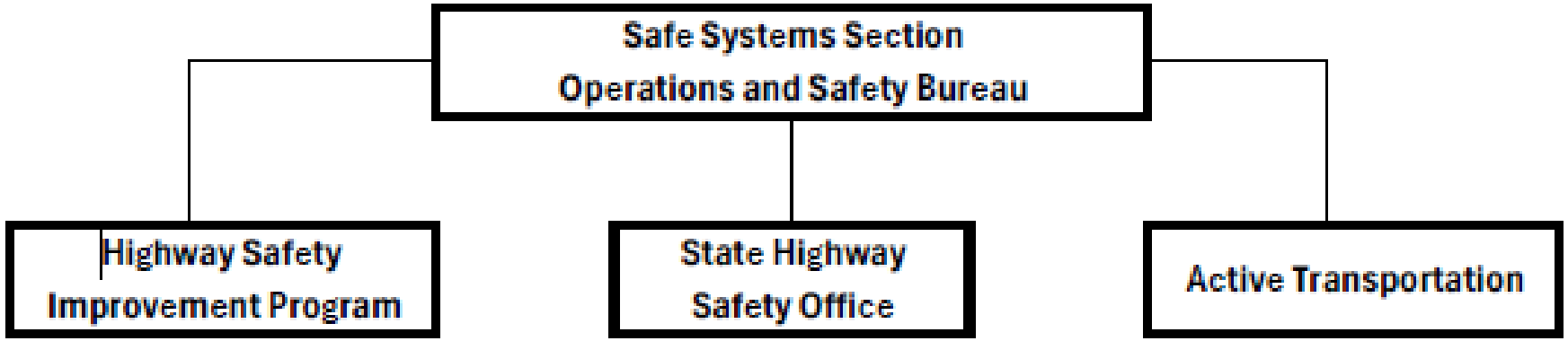
https://www.transportation.gov/NRSS/SafeSystem

Why a Safe Systems Approach at VTrans?

- Mission: Through excellent customer service, provide for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods in a socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable manner.
- Vision: A safe, reliable, and environmentally sustainable multimodal transportation system that grows the economy, is affordable to use and operate, and serves vulnerable populations.
- Safety has been a driving focus for the Agency, but has also encountered challenges:
  - Organizational boundaries
  - Reactive measures
  - Project type and selection

Establishment of a Safe Systems Section

- Data driven approach to reducing fatal and serious injury crashes
- The safe systems approach, with principles focused on shared responsibilities, proactive investments, and redundancy directly relate to many of the challenges we had experienced
- VTrans implemented organizational change, creating a Safe Systems Section to better integrate safety into all planning efforts and projects
  - Located within the Operations and Safety Bureau which includes Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS), traffic signals, traffic operations/mobility, and data management
  - Safe Systems Section brings together a traffic safety engineer, State Highway Safety Office, and Active Transportation Unit into one team



Safe Systems Section - Goals

- Build and promote a strong safety culture by capitalizing on relationships across Bureaus and Divisions
- Management of HSIP funds, development of implementation plans and reports
- Project identification and prioritization
- Development of processes/tools to better incorporate safety within all phases of project development
- Evaluation of the safety impact of countermeasure and projects
- Active Transportation resource for the Agency
- Alignment of behavioral efforts and infrastructure improvements

Thank You!

For More Information Contact:

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