



1 Introduction

Nationally, between 2017 and 2021, 83,206 people died on rural roadways, amounting to 43 percent of all roadway deaths while only 19 percent of the U.S. population lived in rural areas and only 31 percent of all vehicle miles traveled were in rural areas¹. This indicates a critical need to focus safety investments in rural communities.

Between 2018 and 2022, in the Central Ohio seven-county area of Fairfield, Knox, Madison, Marion, Pickaway and Union counties that make up the Central Ohio Regional Planning Organization (CORPO), there were:

- Nearly **50,000 reported crashes**
- More than **300 resulting deaths**
- Almost **2,000 serious injuries**
- More than **100 deaths and serious injuries of pedestrians or bicyclists**
- Approximately **4% of crashes resulted in death or serious injury**

The Central Ohio region is also growing at a steady pace and the CORPO Counties are no exception to this growth. **Between 2021 and 2050, the CORPO region is projected to add 130,000 residents and 47,000 jobs.** With so many additional people on the region’s roadways, improving and continuing to focus on transportation safety is vital. In recent decades, enhancements in automobile safety and a focus on improving the safety of the transportation system both regionally and nationally have garnered some progress, but there is still work to be done to ensure the safety of all road users in our communities.

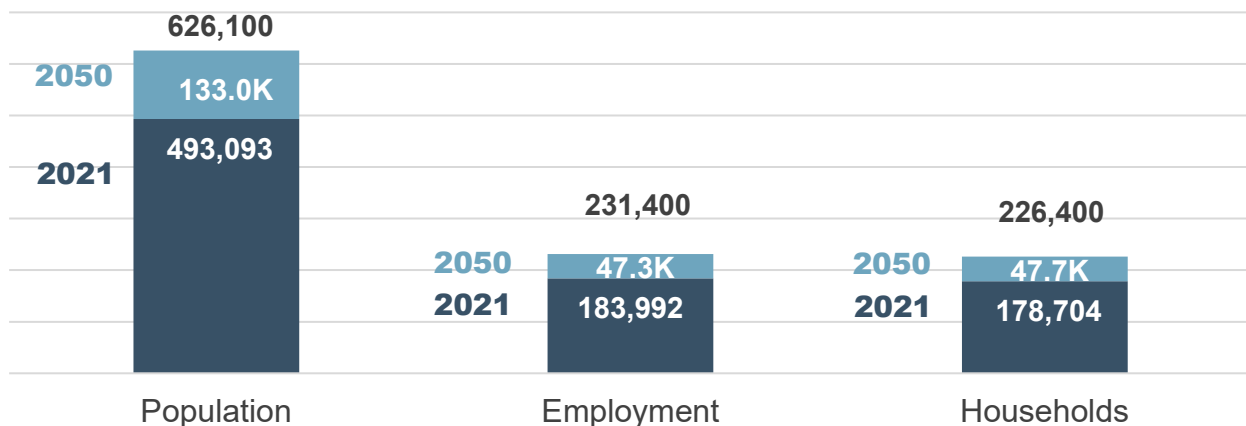


FIGURE 1.1 - CORPO AREA PROJECTED POPULATION, HOUSEHOLDS, AND JOBS GROWTH

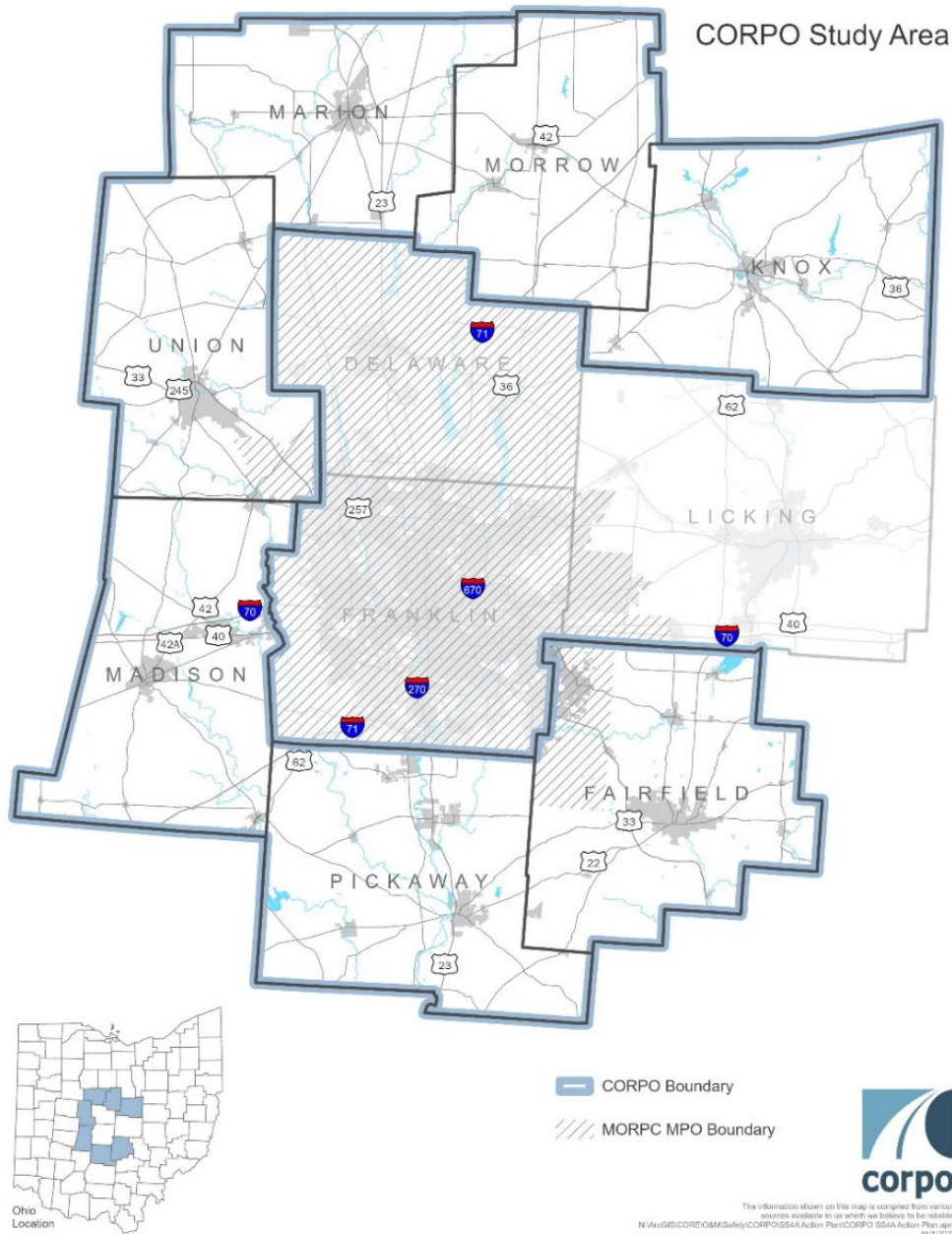
Source: MORPC Forecasts

*Forecasted population, employment, households rounded to nearest 100

¹ Hillary Isebrands, Jamie Sullivan, Kevin Elliot, “Through a Rural Lens, Applying the Safe System Approach,” *TR News*, no. 347 (2023): 13-17.

1.1 CORPO Background

CORPO is designated as an official Ohio Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO) for the seven counties surrounding the Columbus metropolitan area, including Fairfield, Knox, Madison, Marion, Morrow, Pickaway, Union. CORPO is guided by the CORPO Committee and county-level subcommittees and staffed by the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC). In partnership with the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT), each RTPO is tasked with several roles and responsibilities including long-range transportation planning, transportation equity, public involvement, transportation technical assistance, and transportation special studies, such as safety action plans.



1.2 National Roadway Safety Strategy and the Safe System Approach

In 2021, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) was passed and established the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) discretionary program. The program included \$5 billion in appropriated funds over 5 years, beginning in 2022, which would be made available to regional, local, and Tribal governments to fund efforts to prevent roadway deaths and serious injuries. The SS4A program is intended to support the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) [National Roadway Safety Strategy](#) and goal of zero roadway deaths using a Safe System Approach. The U.S. DOT National Roadway Safety Strategy (NRSS) outlines the Department's comprehensive approach to significantly reducing serious injuries and deaths on our Nation's highways, roads, and streets.

Safe System Principles

The Safe System Approach is intended to be an effective way to address and mitigate the risks inherent in the huge and complex transportation system. It is a departure from the conventional safety approach because it focuses on both human error and human vulnerability and designs a system with redundancies in place to protect everyone. The approach works by building and reinforcing multiple layers of protection to both prevent crashes from happening and then to minimize the harm caused to those involved when crashes do occur. It's a holistic and comprehensive approach and guiding framework for making places safer for people².

The Safe System Approach incorporates the following principles:

- **Death and Serious Injuries are Unacceptable:** Prioritize the elimination of crashes that result in serious injury or death.
- **Humans Make Mistakes:** People will inevitably make decisions that can lead or contribute to crashes, but the transportation system can be designed and operated to accommodate certain types and levels of human mistakes and avoid death and serious injury when a crash occurs.
- **Humans are Vulnerable:** Human bodies have physical limits for tolerating crash forces before death or serious injury occurs and therefore it is critical to design and operate a transportation system that is human-centric and accommodates these vulnerabilities.
- **Responsibility is Shared:** All stakeholders, including all levels of government, industry, non-profit, advocacy, researchers, and the public, are vital to preventing fatalities and serious injuries on roadways.
- **Safety is Proactive:** Tools should be used to identify and address safety issues in the transportation system, rather than a reactive approach which waits for crashes to occur.
- **Redundancy is Crucial:** Reducing risks requires that all parts of the transportation system be strengthened, so that if one part fails, the other parts will still protect people.

² *Safe System Approach*, U.S. Department of Transportation (US DOT)

Elements of a Safe System

In addition to the six principles of the Safe System Approach that guide cultural change, there are five elements that further share the responsibility to promote a holistic approach to transportation safety across the system. The elements are listed below and displayed in the graphic in Figure 1.2 below.

- **Safe Road Users:** Encourage safe, responsible driving behavior by people who use roads and create conditions that prioritize people’s ability to reach their destination unharmed.
- **Safe Vehicles:** Expand the availability of vehicle systems and features that help to prevent crashes and minimize the impact of crashes on both occupants and non-occupants.
- **Safe Speeds:** Promote safer speeds in all roadway environments through a combination of thoughtful, equitable, context-appropriate roadway design, appropriate speed-limit setting, targeted education, outreach campaigns, and enforcement.
- **Safe Roads:** Design roadway environments to mitigate human mistakes and account for injury tolerances, to encourage safe behaviors, and to facilitate safe travel by the most vulnerable users.
- **Post-Crash Care:** Enhance the survivability of crashes through expedient access to emergency medical care, while creating a safe working environment for vital first responders and preventing secondary crashes through robust traffic incident management practices



FIGURE 1.2 - THE SAFE SYSTEM APPROACH

Image Source: U.S. Department of Transportation

1.3 Safety Action Plan

The SS4A program supports the development of a comprehensive safety action plan (Action Plan). A safety action plan identifies the most significant roadway safety concerns and the implementation of projects and strategies to address roadway safety issues. The goal of this action plan is to develop a holistic, well-defined strategy to prevent roadway fatalities and serious injuries in the region. The SS4A program also supports implementation grants, which provide Federal funds to implement projects and strategies identified in an Action Plan to address a roadway safety problem. SS4A requires an eligible Action Plan to be in place before agencies apply to implement projects and strategies. The CORPO 2024 Safety Action Plan is intended to fulfill the Action Plan requirements for the CORPO region.

The Action Plan is the foundation of the SS4A program, and the primary deliverable of the Action Plan process is the publicly available Action Plan document. The USDOT considers the process of developing an Action Plan to be critical for success and provides several required components that reflect a process-oriented set of activities. The following are required components for an SS4A Action Plan with reference to the corresponding chapter and section within this Safety Action Plan document:

- **Leadership Commitment and Goal Setting:** *Section 1.2 Leadership Commitment and Goal Setting*
- **Planning Structure:** *Section 1.5 Planning Process and Engagement*
- **Safety Analysis:** *Section 2.1 Crash Data Overview*
- **Engagement and Collaboration:** *Section 1.5 Planning Process and Engagement*
- **Equity Considerations:** *Chapter 3. Priority Safety Locations, Section 3.2 Equity Considerations*
- **Policy and Process Changes:** *Section 2.2 Related Planning Efforts, Chapter 4. Strategies, Action Items, and Project Selections*
- **Strategy and Project Selections:** *Chapter 4. Strategies, Action Items, and Project Selections*
- **Progress and Transparency:** *Section 5.*

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1.4 Safety Performance Measures

Established as a requirement in 2012 under the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21), all Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) must coordinate with state departments of transportation to establish targets for five safety performance measures. This includes the following measures, which are calculated using a 5-year rolling average:

- Number of fatalities;
- Rate of fatalities (per 100 million vehicle miles travelled, or MVMT);
- Number of serious injuries;
- Rate of serious injuries (per 100 million vehicle miles travelled, or MVMT); and,
- Number of non-motorized fatalities and non-motorized serious injuries.

This requirement does not currently apply to Rural Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPOs), such as CORPO, but these performance measures are a key method for tracking progress in the effort to mitigate death and serious injury on our roadways. As such, Table 2. 13 documents the current baseline conditions for these safety performance measures based on the crash data analyzed for 2018-2022 in the CORPO area. This data will serve as the benchmark for measuring progress toward the identified targets to reduce fatality and serious injury crashes -- **by 2% annually**. Table 2. 13 also includes the performance measures for the MORPC MPO planning area for comparison. While the total numbers of fatalities and serious injuries are lower in the CORPO area than in the MORPC MPO area, the CORPO area has slightly higher fatality and serious injury rates than the MPO area.

Performance Measure	CORPO Area	MORPC MPO Area
Fatality Rate (Fatalities per 100 MVMT)	1.25	1.09
Serious Injury Rate (Serious Injuries per 100 MVMT)	7.32	6.63
Total Fatalities	65	138
Total Serious Injuries	381	845
Total Non-Motorized Fatalities and Serious Injuries	29	156

TABLE 1.1 - SAFETY PERFORMANCE MEASURES (2018-2022)

**All performance measures are calculated using a 5-year rolling average*

1.5 Leadership Commitment and Goal Setting

The goal for Central Ohio is a safe transportation system for all road users.

CORPO identified six regional goals to guide the organization's long-range transportation planning, and providing a safe transportation system for all users is one of the most important goals for the region. CORPO is working cooperatively with its member counties and communities, the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT), and various other transportation stakeholders toward improving safety across the region's transportation network.

In developing the CORPO Safety Action Plan, the stakeholder committee endorsed a target of reducing fatalities and serious injuries by 2% each year across the region. This is in line with the targets adopted by ODOT for the statewide safety performance measures, as well as the targets adopted by MORPC for the MPO Planning Area safety performance measures.

The target is a 2% annual reduction in fatalities and serious injuries, to move toward the ultimate target of zero roadway fatalities and serious injuries.

The Safety Action Plan provides a framework and actions to support this long-term safety goal. The plan and associated materials are intended to be a resource and guide for stakeholders and communities throughout the region to use in addressing the safety of all road users with data-informed decisions and scalable investments.

Moving Toward Zero

As illustrated by the chart in Figure 1.3 below, over the five-year period between 2018 and 2022, traffic crashes in the CORPO region accounted for approximately 381 serious injuries and 65 fatalities, on average. That equates to more than 400 people per year who are serious injured or killed, simply while traveling on our region's roadways.

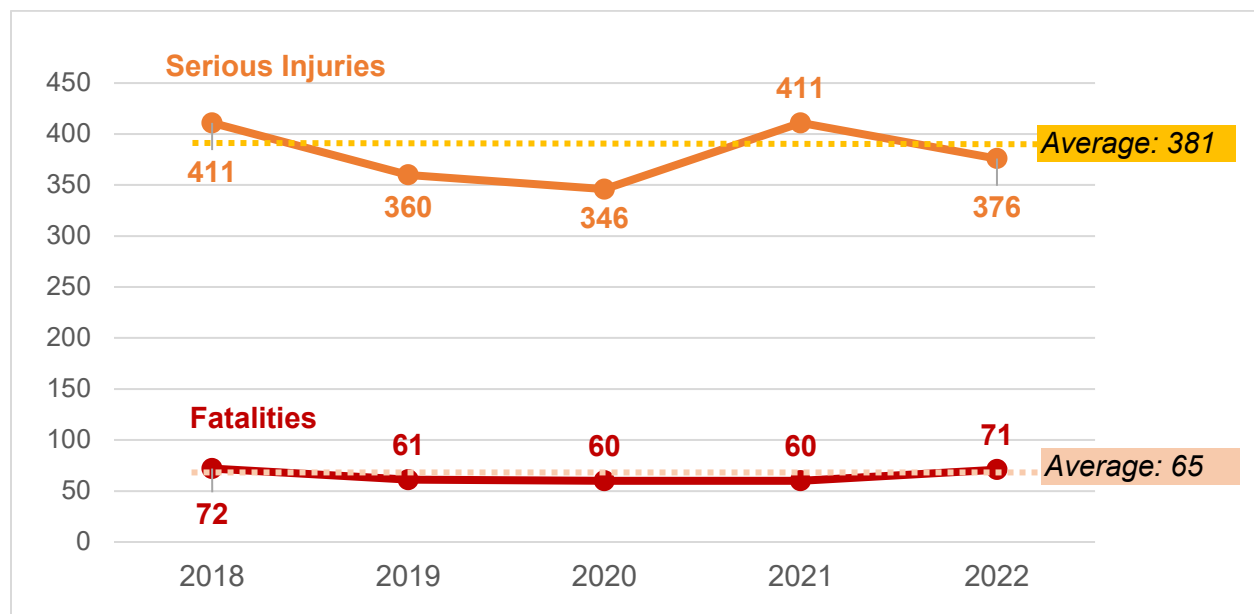


FIGURE 1.3 - FATALITIES AND SERIOUS INJURIES (2018-2022)

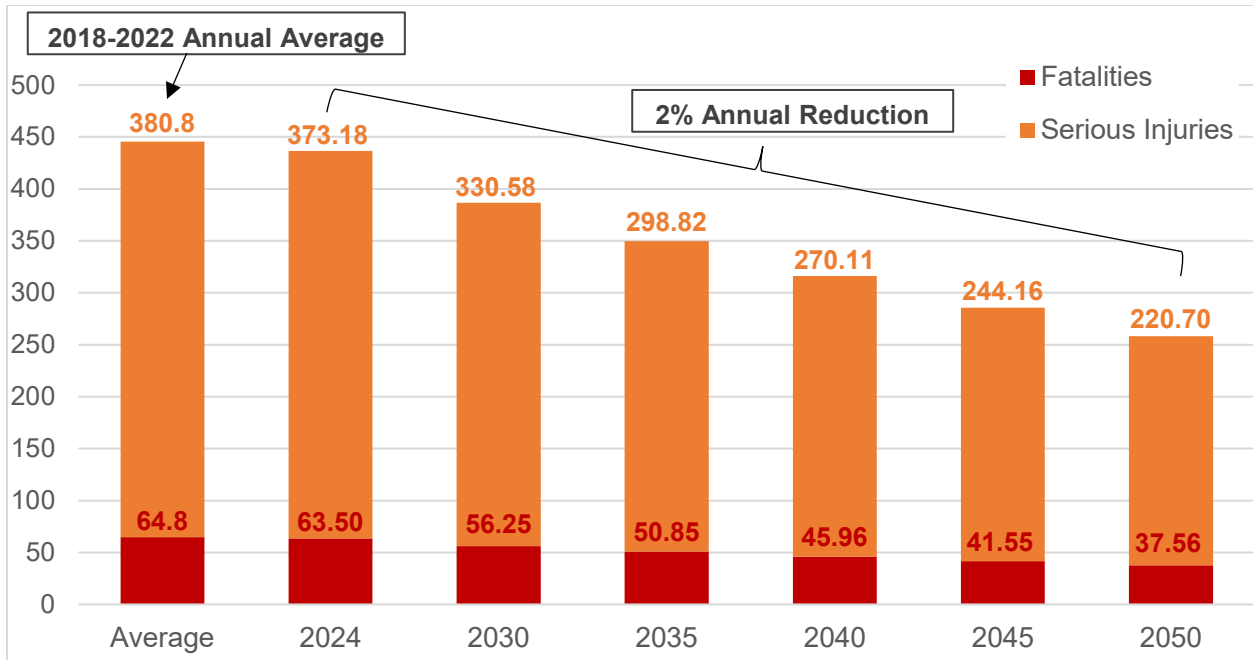


FIGURE 1.4 - 2% ANNUAL REDUCTION IN FATALITIES AND SERIOUS INJURIES (2024-2050)

Figure 1.3 above illustrates the identified target, a 2% annual reduction in fatalities and serious injuries, over the period between 2024 and 2050. By 2050, a 2% annual reduction will result in 27 fewer fatalities and 160 fewer serious injuries annually than the 2018-2022 annual averages. Achieving the target of 2% annual reduction will result in a significant decline in roadway fatalities and serious injuries by 2050 and make progress toward the ultimate goal of zero roadway fatalities and serious injuries and creating a truly safe transportation system for all.

1.6 Plan Development and Content

The document is organized into five chapters and four technical memos or appendices.

Primary Document

1- INTRODUCTION

This chapter includes a general overview of what CORPO is, the National Roadway Safety Strategy and Safe System Approach, and what a Safety Action Plan is. Also includes an overview of the leadership commitment and goal setting process, provides background on the required components of an Action Plan, and a summary of the planning process and stakeholders involved in the development of the plan.

2- CURRENT CONDITIONS AND RELATED EFFORTS

This chapter summarizes crash data from the five-year period between 2018-2022 throughout the CORPO region as well as other related planning efforts. The crash data overview includes an assessment of the trends over this period and identifies key patterns and factors including location, crash types and severity, and other contributing factors.

3- REGIONAL SAFETY PRIORITIES

This chapter identifies key emphasis based on the data analysis summarized in *Chapter 2. Current Conditions and Related Efforts*. Additionally, the chapter documents and illustrates areas identified for equity considerations as well as priority safety locations that were developed using geospatial analyses.

4- STRATEGIES, ACTION ITEMS, AND PROJECT SELECTIONS

This chapter documents the strategies and action items identified to create progress toward achieving the targets identified in the Action Plan. Also included is a recommended process for project identification and prioritization using the data highlighted in Chapters 2 and 3.

5- IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

This chapter describes how the CORPO 2024 Safety Action Plan will be implemented through the work of CORPO, in partnership with ODOT, MORPC, and regional and local partners, including providing a list of potential funding sources. The chapter also outlines how plan implementation progress and outcomes will be tracked.

Appendices

TECHNICAL MEMO A- ACTION PLAN

The foundation for the implementation of the CORPO Safety Action Plan. This document consolidates the strategies and action items and identifies specific partners and timeframes for implementation.

TECHNICAL MEMO B.1 & B.2- STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT & PUBLIC SURVEY

Compendium of stakeholder meeting summaries, materials, survey questions, and public survey input received.

TECHNICAL MEMO C- DETAILED TECHNICAL ANALYSIS

Long-form analysis conducted that resulted in the higher-level summaries included throughout the plan.

TECHNICAL MEMO D- COUNTY FOCUS AREAS

Describes key challenges and opportunities that were identified specifically for each county in the creation of the plan throughout the planning and input process.

1.7 Stakeholder and Public Engagement

The Action Plan document was prepared by MORPC and guided by the CORPO committee, CORPO county subcommittees, a stakeholder group, and with input from the public over a six-month period. Stakeholder and public involvement were key components in developing the Safety Action plan and was instrumental in understanding local roadway safety issues, needs, and in identifying impactful recommendations. CORPO used several techniques to connect and engage with a broad base of perspectives on transportation safety.

This section provides an overview of the stakeholder and public engagement process. Additional detail on the outreach process, including materials from the stakeholder and public engagement activities, a list of stakeholder group members, and a compendium of the input received, are available in Technical Memo B- Stakeholder and Public Input.

CORPO Committee Structure

The CORPO Committee consists of three members from each county and is responsible for coordinating all regional transportation planning for the CORPO seven-county area. The CORPO Committee is guided by the CORPO County subcommittees in each of the seven CORPO counties. Many county subcommittee members participated in development of the Action Plan as stakeholders and the county subcommittees also reviewed and provided input on the draft plan.

CORPO Safety Action Plan Stakeholders

To guide the creation of the CORPO Safety Action Plan, a diverse group of stakeholders from across the CORPO region was assembled representing each county and each of the Safe Systems elements. The stakeholder group consisted of 54 members and included representatives from local administration, city and county engineering, community development, regional planning, parks and trails, mobility and transit, fire and emergency services, health departments, hospitals or healthcare, vehicle research, Safe Communities Coalitions, Ohio State Highway Patrol, FWHA, and ODOT.

Over the course of four stakeholder meetings, the group provided direction and valuable insight on local road safety concerns and issues. The insight provided by the stakeholder group helped to develop the strategies and action items that guide the plan. The stakeholder group also weighed in and selected the 2% annual reduction target.

Public Participation and Engagement

Through its committees, staff, representatives, members, and other partners, CORPO works to ensure that the needs of all segments of the population are represented in the transportation planning process. CORPO's plan for public engagement is available on the [CORPO website](#).

A public survey was developed and administered in early February 2024 to collect input on local road safety issues and priorities for addressing transportation safety. A total of 278 responses were collected from the seven counties. The input received supported the development of the strategies and action items that guide the plan.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

A 30-day public comment period for the CORPO 2024 Safety Action Plan was held from March 11, 2024 until April 11, 2024.