Northwest Louisiana Region Transportation Safety Plan

prepared by
Northwest Louisiana Transportation Safety Coalition

in coordination with
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1.0 Regional and Statewide Transportation Safety Overview

1.1 PLAN OVERVIEW

The Northwest Louisiana Region Transportation Safety Plan (NWLRTP) is a data-driven action plan developed by the Northwest Louisiana Transportation Safety Coalition (NWLTSC). NWLTSC partners, including representatives from the 4 Es (education, enforcement, engineering, and emergency medical services), collaborated to identify effective multimodal transportation safety solutions in the parishes of Bienville, Bossier, Caddo, Claiborne, DeSoto, Red River, and Webster.

Funded by the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LADOTD), this living document follows similar goals and strategies established in the statewide Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP). It primarily seeks to implement transportation safety projects at the regional and local levels. Like the SHSP, the NWLRTP’s measurable goal is to reduce the number of roadway fatalities in the region by one-half by 2030. To achieve this target, noninfrastructure and infrastructure efforts will be undertaken in four emphasis areas, namely: Occupant Protection, Impaired Driving, Crashes Involving Young Drivers, and Infrastructure and Operations.

This plan also is supported by the Federal Highway Safety Administration (FHWA), Louisiana Highway Safety Commission (LHSC), and the jurisdictions in the seven parish, northwest Louisiana region.

1.2 CONNECTION TO THE SHSP

In 2006, Congress passed the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act – A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), which established the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) as a core federal program. To receive funding under this program, states were required to develop SHSPs. The SHSP is a data-driven, five-year comprehensive plan that establishes statewide goals, objectives, key emphasis areas, and proven strategies to reduce fatalities and serious injuries. The Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) doubled funding under the HSIP program, signaling a continued focus on reducing transportation-related fatalities and serious injuries. The Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act) continued essentially the same policies. Since crashes are most likely caused by a number of different factors, the strategies developed in the SHSP are a result of a number of different techniques, including engineering, education, law enforcement, and emergency medical services.

In 2006, LADOTD developed the state’s first SHSP to mitigate the devastating effects of motor vehicle-related fatalities and serious injuries on Louisiana roadways.

In 2011, LADOTD completed an update to the original plan and identified the leading factors contributing to fatalities in the state, which included occupant protection, alcohol-related driving, run-off-road crashes, young drivers, and intersection crashes. To address these areas, the SHSP puts forth a number of aggressive projects and programs with the intent of reaching the new state goal: Halve fatalities by 2030.
The updated SHSP uses a baseline average of 2009 to 2011 data to calculate the necessary rate of change to achieve a 50-percent reduction in fatalities by 2030. Benchmarks for achieving this goal are illustrated in Figure 1.1.

**Figure 1.1  Benchmark to Achieve 50-Percent Reduction in Fatalities by 2030**

Statewide

To reach the goal of 370 fatalities, the effort is two-fold. At the state level, LADOTD, LHSC, Louisiana State Police (LSP), Louisiana Technical Assistance Program (LTAP), and other safety stakeholders have identified and are implementing strategies in the four key emphasis areas to reduce fatalities and serious injuries. The emphasis area teams meet regularly to track implementation of the various strategies and action steps in the statewide SHSP.

At the local level, LADOTD has split the state into nine different regions (as shown in Figure 1.2), which correspond to the DOTD districts and the LSP troop commands. Each region is charged with forming a multidisciplinary or 4 E safety coalition, reviewing the regional and local crash data, and developing a continually evolving, data-driven action plan that is linked to the SHSP. During the plan development process, the regional safety coalitions meet to assess the contributing crash factors on the state and local roads in the region, select emphasis areas, and identify strategies and action steps to mitigate these issues. Often, the regional safety issues are similar to the statewide issues, so the regional teams adopt strategies and actions steps from the statewide emphasis area team action plans. They also are encouraged to identify new data-driven strategies and action steps to reduce fatalities and serious injuries in the region. Although DOTD implements a number of safety programs and projects at the statewide level, the regional plans harness local knowledge to identify what safety programs and projects will have the greatest impact on fatalities at the parish level.

The benefits of this regional approach to safety planning include:

- The strategies and actions in the SHSP are being implemented at the regional level. Broader implementation ensures better opportunities to reduce fatalities and serious injuries.
- DOTD is in a better position to understand and potentially fund regional safety priorities.
- The regional teams have new opportunities to receive funding for the critical safety needs in a region.
The regional teams have better access to and a better understanding of crash data. They also are better connected to safety stakeholders and partnerships.

The coalitions are led by an MPO in the region, as is the case with the Northwest Louisiana Council of Governments (NLCOG). The involvement of the NLCOG is important to ensure that the results of plans are linked to the NLCOG Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and included in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Figure 1.2  Regional Safety Coalitions
1.3 **REGIONAL SAFETY COALITION MEMBERS**

In the northwest Louisiana region, the stakeholder coalition that developed this plan is comprised of a diverse group of safety stakeholders representing the MPO, federal/state highway safety agencies, law enforcement, health professionals, EMS personnel, policy-makers, bicycle and pedestrian advocates, educators, and youth and local community residents.

The stakeholders who drafted the contents of the plan and will oversee its development, implementation, and evaluation include:

- LADOTD, LHSC, NLCOG, LSP Troop G, Bossier City, City of Shreveport, City of Greenwood, Bienville Parish, Bossier Parish, Caddo Parish, Claiborne Parish, DeSoto Parish, Red River Parish, Webster Parish, and FHWA. However, all safety stakeholders from the northwest Louisiana region can contribute their ideas to this plan. The following additional agencies (listed in alphabetical order) constitute the full list of safety stakeholders in the region, who should be consulted and included in future iterations of the plan:

  - Aillet, Fenner, Jolly & McClelland; Bienville Police Jury, Bossier Assistant District Attorney, Bossier City Police Department, Bossier Council on Aging, Bossier Parish 911, Bossier Parish Community College, Bossier Parish EMS, Bossier Parish Police Jury, Bossier Parish Schools, Bossier Press-Tribune, Bossier Parish Sheriff’s Office, Caddo Coroner, Caddo District Attorney’s Office, Caddo Parish Sheriff’s Office, Caddo Parish 911, Caddo Parish Public Works, Caddo Sheriff’s Safety Town, Catholic Charities of Northwest Louisiana, Centenary College Police, Claiborne Parish Sheriff’s Office, DeSoto Parish Police Jury, DeSoto Parish Sheriff’s Department, Federal Rail Administration, First Class Driving School, Greenwood Police Department, Holy Trinity Catholic Church, KCS Railroad, KCS-Operation Lifesaver, LCMC Health, Legislature- Senator District 37, Lone Star Missionary Baptist Church, Louisiana Campaign for Tobacco Free Living, Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services, Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals, Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development District 4, Louisiana District Attorneys Association, Louisiana Passenger Safety Task Force (LPSTP), Louisiana State University at Shreveport, Louisiana Transportation Research Center, LSP Drivers Education, MADD, Northwest LA Human Services District, Port of Caddo/Bossier, Plain Dealing Police Department, Red River Parish Sheriff’s Department, Reiser Sonic Group, Shreveport Police Department, SporTran, Think First, University Health Shreveport, and Webster Parish Sheriff’s Office.
2.0 Vision, Mission, Goals, and Performance Measures

2.1 Vision and Mission

The vision of the NWLRTSP is to reach destination zero deaths on roadways in the northwest Louisiana region. The mission is to reduce the human and economic toll on the region’s surface transportation system due to traffic crashes through widespread collaboration and an integrated 4 E approach. The coalition intends to continually revise and implement this plan to bring about a program of priorities designed to reduce the incidence of traffic crashes within the northwest Louisiana region.

2.2 Goal

One reason for developing the NWLRTSP is to align the region with the statewide safety goals. The goal of the SHSP and the NWLRTSP are to **halve fatalities by 2030**. The NWLRTSP uses a baseline average of 2009 to 2013 data to calculate the rate of change to achieve a 50 percent reduction in fatalities by 2030. Figure 2.1 shows the benchmarks for achieving this goal. Although this goal will not change from year to year, the annual reduction rate needed to achieve the goal could vary based on each year’s progress. Serious injuries sustained in motor vehicle crashes also make up a significant portion of the human and economic toll in the region. Figure 2.2 illustrates the benchmarks for reducing serious injuries by 50 percent by 2030.
2.3 PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The performance measures used to track progress toward reaching the goal of cutting fatalities in half by 2030, include: 1) the annual number of motor vehicle-related fatalities and 2) the annual number of serious injuries. The same metrics
will be used to track performance measures for each emphasis area, including Occupant Protection, Impaired Driving, Young Drivers, and Infrastructure and Operations. For purposes of this plan, the interim targets are established in a linear fashion; however, in reality the correct estimates are probably a nonlinear function because the advances will be more difficult to achieve in the latter years. In future analysis, a more statistical approach to setting interim targets will be developed.

Two companion documents to the plan include: 1) detailed emphasis area action plans that identify the steps necessary to implement each strategy or countermeasure, the action step leader, an activity description, resources required, and status/output measures and 2) an Excel tracking tool used to review annual progress towards the performance measures and to demonstrate progress on each of the action items in the plan.
3.0 Problem Identification and Emphasis Area Selection

3.1 Emphasis Area Selection

The NWLTSC based selection of the SHSP emphasis areas on the following factors:

- The availability of robust 2009 to 2013 baseline year data, which clearly defines the problem and contributing crash factors (the source for all the data shown in this Plan is the Louisiana State University Highway Safety Research Group (HSRG) Reports – Traffic Data, 2015);

- The identification of programs and projects with the greatest potential for improving safety; and

- The ability of the region to access resources for implementing proven effective countermeasures.

The northwest Louisiana region has made some progress in lowering fatalities and serious injuries over the last seven years. Table 3.1 depicts the overall number of fatalities and serious injuries in the region between 2009 and 2015. The overall number of fatalities and serious injuries has declined 28 percent from 2009 to 2015. Fatalities have declined by 17 percent, while serious injuries decreased by 31 percent during the same period.

### Table 3.1 Fatalities and Serious Injuries in Northwest Louisiana Region 2009 to 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Fatalities</th>
<th>Serious Injuries</th>
<th>Fatalities and Serious Injuries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>331</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>2082</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>256</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3.1 illustrates the number of fatalities and serious injuries in the northwest Louisiana region by parishes. Caddo leads the region, followed by Bossier and Webster. Table 3.2 shows the populations for each parish, which helps explain why the fatality and serious injury numbers for these three parishes are often the highest by emphasis area.
Figure 3.1  Fatalities and Serious Injuries by Parishes in Northwest Louisiana Region
2009 to 2015

Table 3.2  Population by Parish in Northwest Louisiana Region
2010 U.S. Census

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parish</th>
<th>2010 Census Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bienville</td>
<td>14,353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bossier</td>
<td>116,979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caddo</td>
<td>254,969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claiborne</td>
<td>17,195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DeSoto</td>
<td>26,656</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red River</td>
<td>9,091</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Webster</td>
<td>41,207</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3.2 shows the leading factors contributing to fatalities in the region, including roadway departure crashes, no use restraints (e.g. seat belts or child safety seats), impaired driving, young drivers, and intersection crashes. The reason the percentages do not add up to 100 percent is because most crashes involve more than a single factor. For example, the primary cause of a crash may be attributed to an impaired driver, but the car also could have run off the road. The police report would make note of both these factors, so the crash would be counted in both categories.
Based on analysis of the 2009 to 2013 baseline data and other considerations, the agencies recommended focusing attention, energy, and resources on five emphasis areas:

1. Infrastructure and Operations (Roadway Departure and Intersections)
2. Occupant Protection
3. Impaired Driving
4. Young Driver Crashes

The remainder of this section discusses each emphasis area, including the goal established for the emphasis area and proposed strategies.

### 3.2 Infrastructure and Operations

Louisiana experiences a high incidence of roadway departure and intersection crashes. Contributing factors often include loss of control, misjudging a curve, attempting to avoid a collision with an animal, alcohol use, distracted driving, and aggressive driving. Intersections have a high-crash potential given the many conflict points between vehicles and other road users, such as pedestrians and bicyclists. However, intersection-related crashes tend to be less deadly than roadway departure crashes, primarily due to the lower speeds.

#### 3.2.1 Roadway Departures

In the northwest Louisiana region, 63.4 percent of fatalities were attributed run-off-the-road incidents. Between 2009 and 2015, roadway departure fatalities and serious injuries fluctuated, with a low of 39 fatalities in 2012 and 69 serious...
injuries in 2013. Overall, between 2009 and 2015, serious injuries decreased 19 percent and fatalities decreased nine percent, as shown in Figure 3.3. Parishes experiencing the highest number of combined fatalities and serious injuries as a result of roadway departure crashes include Caddo, Bossier, and Webster, as shown in Figure 3.4.

**Figure 3.3** Roadway Departure Fatalities and Serious Injuries in Northwest Louisiana Region 2009 to 2015

**Figure 3.4** Roadway Departure Fatalities and Serious Injuries by Parish in Northwest Louisiana Region 2009 to 2015
3.2.2 Intersections

Between 2009 and 2015, 22.6 percent of the total fatalities were attributed to intersection crashes. Serious injuries have slowly decreased over these seven years with a low of 88 in 2015. Between 2009 and 2015, serious injuries at intersections have decreased by 21 percent. Over the same timeframe, fatalities have fluctuated with a low of eight in 2013 (Figure 3.5). Figure 3.6 shows the parishes with the highest number of combined fatality and serious injuries at intersections, including Caddo, Bossier, and Webster.

Figure 3.5 Intersection Fatalities and Serious Injuries in Northwest Louisiana Region 2009 to 2015
3.2.3 Goals

The goal for the Infrastructure and Operations Emphasis Area is to reduce roadway departure and intersection fatalities and injuries by 50 percent by 2030. Figures 3.7 through 3.10 show the benchmarks to achieve these goals.
Figure 3.8  Benchmarks to Achieve a 50-Percent Reduction in Roadway Departure Injuries in Northwest Louisiana Region by 2030

Figure 3.9  Benchmarks to Achieve a 50-Percent Reduction in Intersection Fatalities in Northwest Louisiana Region by 2030
Figure 3.10  Benchmarks to Achieve a 50-Percent Reduction in Intersection Injuries in Northwest Louisiana Region by 2030
To achieve these goals, the NWLTSC Infrastructure and Operations Emphasis Area Team identified the following three strategies:

1. Analyze crash data for roadway departures and intersections to identify crash locations and/or safety concerns.
2. Identify and mitigate high crash roadway departure locations.
3. Identify and mitigate high crash intersections locations.

### 3.3 Occupant Protection

Louisiana enacted primary enforcement legislation in 1995, which allows law enforcement officers to stop and ticket a driver if they observe a safety belt violation. Louisiana’s safety belt use falls below the average for primary enforcement states, as well as the national average for all states (Figure 3.11). From 2007 to 2015, the safety belt use national average and primary enforcement state average mostly increased each year, while Louisiana remained largely unchanged from 2007 to 2010 but steadily increased 11 percentage points from 2010 to 2015.

**Figure 3.11  Observed Safety Belt Use  
2007 to 2015**

![Safety Belt Use Graph]

Despite the statewide issues, the northwest Louisiana region has seen decreases in unbelted fatalities and serious injuries. In 2012, serious injuries hit an all-time low over the past four years. Figure 3.12 shows that, between 2010 and 2013, fatalities dropped by 50 percent and serious injuries by 17 percent. Unbelted driving crashes predominantly occur in Caddo, but multiple parishes, including Bossier and DeSoto also experience issues, as shown in Figure 3.13.
Figure 3.12  Unrestrained Fatalities and Serious Injuries in Northwest Louisiana Region, 2009 to 2015

Figure 3.13  Unrestrained Fatalities and Serious Injuries by Parish in Northwest Louisiana Region, 2009 to 2015
3.3.1 Goal

The goal for the Occupant Protection Emphasis Area Team is to decrease unbelted fatalities and injuries by 50 percent by 2030 and increase the safety belt use rate. Figures 3.14 and 3.15 illustrate the benchmarks to achieve these goals.

Figure 3.14  Benchmarks to Achieve a 50-Percent Reduction in Unrestrained Fatalities in Northwest Louisiana Region by 2030

Figure 3.15  Benchmarks to Achieve a 50-Percent Reduction in Unrestrained Injuries in Northwest Louisiana by 2030
To achieve these goals, the NWLTSC Occupant Protection Emphasis Area Team identified the following three strategies:

1. Encourage use of seat belts.
2. Encourage use of appropriate child restraint seats.
3. Encourage use of helmets (bicycles and ATVs).

### 3.4 Impaired Driving

Louisiana exceeded the national average for the percent of alcohol-related fatalities from 2006 through 2014. Impaired driving also is one of the leading cases of fatalities in the northwest Louisiana region. The crash data show that alcohol-related fatalities accounted for 30 percent of fatalities between 2009 and 2013, exceeded only by roadway departure and unrestrained fatalities. Evidence of other substances in the blood, including drugs and prescription medications, is also a concern in Louisiana. Complete data are not available to understand the full extent of drugged driving, but statewide strategies are exploring drugged driving issues and needs. Strategies to address these issues will eventually be incorporated into the regional plans.

Despite the high percentages, progress has been made to lower alcohol-related fatalities and serious injuries. Figure 3.16 shows the total number of alcohol-related fatalities and serious injuries between 2009 and 2015 in the Northwest Louisiana region. In 2011, serious injuries in the region hit an all-time low over the seven-year time frame; and although fatalities increased between 2009 and 2010, they declined by 54 percent from 2010 to 2013. The region has experienced a spike in fatalities since the 2012-2013 low of 17. Figure 3.17 illustrates the breakdown of total impaired driving fatalities and serious injuries by parishes between 2009 and 2015. Caddo leads the region, followed by Bossier.
3.4.1 Goal

The goal for the Impaired Driving Emphasis Area Team is to reduce alcohol-related fatalities and injuries by no less than 50 percent by 2030. Figures 3.18 and 3.19 show the benchmarks for fatalities and injuries.
Figure 3.18  Benchmarks to Achieve a 50-Percent Reduction in Impaired Driving Fatalities in Northwest Louisiana Region by 2030

Figure 3.19  Benchmarks to Achieve a 50-Percent Reduction in Impaired Driving Injuries in Northwest Louisiana Region by 2030

To achieve these goals, the NWLTSC Impaired Driving Emphasis Area Team identified the following three strategies:

1. Increase training opportunities for local law enforcement agencies and advanced training for state troops.
2. Increase awareness among all road users of the dangers of impaired driving.

3. Increase the number of impaired driving related high-visibility enforcement activities.

### 3.5 Crashes Involving Young Drivers

Like most states, Louisiana’s young drivers are over-represented in fatal crashes. In 2010, young drivers (15 to 24 years old) accounted for 30.7 percent of fatalities, but only 14.5 percent of licensed drivers. Figure 3.20 shows this breakdown for 2009 to 2015.

**Figure 3.20** Young Drivers (Age 15 to 24) Involved Fatalities as Percent of Total Fatalities

![Bar chart showing the percentage of young drivers involved in fatal crashes from 2009 to 2015](chart)

In the northwest Louisiana region, young drivers accounted for 24.5 percent of the fatalities between 2009 and 2015. In spite of some fluctuations from 2009 to 2015 years, Figure 3.21 shows that fatalities have increased slightly by 7 percent and serious injuries by 33 percent. Figure 3.22 shows that, although each parish has issues with young driver fatalities and serious injuries, Caddo far exceeds the others with a combined total 376 between 2009 and 2015.
Figure 3.21  Young Driver Fatalities and Serious Injuries (Ages 15 to 24) in Northwest Louisiana Region 2009 to 2015

Figure 3.22  Young Driver Fatalities and Serious Injuries by Parish in Northwest Louisiana Region 2009 to 2015
3.5.1 Goal

The goal for the Young Drivers Emphasis Area team is to reduce fatalities involving young drivers by 50 percent by 2030. Figures 3.23 and 3.24 illustrate the benchmarks for this goal.

Figure 3.23  Benchmarks to Achieve a 50-Percent Reduction in Fatalities Involving Young Drivers in Northwest Louisiana Region by 2030

Figure 3.24  Benchmarks to Achieve a 50-Percent Reduction in Injuries Involving Young Drivers in Northwest Louisiana Region by 2030
To achieve these benchmarks, the NWLTSC Young Driver Emphasis Area Team identified the following two strategies:

1. Encourage safe driving practices related to alcohol, seat belts, texting, speeding, and passengers by young drivers ages 15 to 18.
   a. Conduct education programs that improve young driver safety ages 15 to 18.
   b. Promote enforcement programs that improve young driver safety ages 15 to 18.

2. Encourage safe driving practices related to alcohol, seat belts, texting, speeding, and passengers by young drivers ages 18 to 24.
   a. Conduct education programs that improve young driver safety ages 18 to 24.
   b. Promote enforcement programs that improve young driver safety ages 18 to 24.
4.0 **SHSP Management, Implementation, and Evaluation**

4.1 **RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE REGIONAL SAFETY COALITIONS**

Upon completion of NWLRTSP development, responsibilities shift to management, implementation, and evaluation of the plan. Moving forward, key coalition responsibilities include:

- Continuation of regular (quarterly or monthly) meetings to review program and project activities
- Annual review of crash data to reevaluate the regional transportation safety problems
- Annual evaluation of strategies, programs, and projects in the plan to determine effectiveness
- Annual update of the regional action plans
- Updates on progress to the statewide emphasis area team leaders

4.2 **SAFETY PROGRAM AND PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION**

Effective implementation of the NWLRTSP vision, goals, and emphasis area strategies requires extensive coordination and cooperation among regional stakeholders. Coalition members should meet biannually, at a minimum, to discuss the following objectives:

- Review implementation progress and performance in the emphasis areas
- Provide assistance to overcome barriers and solve problems
- Measure performance on SHSP-related campaigns, trainings, and other programs
- Provide guidance on future programs and activities

4.3 **EVALUATION**

The evaluation of the NWLRTSP will study both process and outcome measures to determine if the planned projects and programs are being implemented and affecting the number of motor vehicle-related fatalities and serious injuries. The regional emphasis area team leaders will report progress on action steps identified in the regional safety action plans quarterly through the use of a tracking and monitoring tool. Using this tool, it is possible to monitor performance and more global process performance measures, such as the number of countermeasures underway, completed, or not started. Regional coalition leaders will give progress reports at the biannual implementation team meetings.