

Every Day Counts Encourages New Safety Strategies

National initiative promotes rapid innovation deployment

Two safety-focused approaches—data-driven safety analysis and road diets—are part of round three of Every Day Counts, the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) initiative to collaborate with transportation stakeholders to rapidly deploy highway transportation innovations.

Launched in 2009, Every Day Counts (EDC) encourages mainstream use of proven, yet underutilized, innovative approaches to enhance the highway system and advance a culture of innovation in the transportation community.

“We're saving money, saving time and saving lives, exactly the results we said were possible if we made innovation a standard industry practice,” said FHWA Administrator Gregory Nadeau.

Every two years, FHWA works with stakeholders to identify a new set of technologies and practices that merit widespread adoption. The selected innovations share common goals of shortening project delivery, enhancing the safety and durability of roads and bridges, cutting traffic congestion and improving environmental sustainability.

The third round of EDC, which promotes adoption of 11 innovations in 2015 and 2016, builds on successful deployment efforts during the first two rounds. State-based groups, such as State Transportation Innovation Councils, bring together public and private stakeholders to select and, ultimately, deploy the innovations that best address program needs over the next two years. More than 40 states have selected data-driven safety analysis and road diets to deploy under the third round of EDC.

Data-Driven Safety Analysis

Data-driven safety analysis focuses on two approaches to making safety investment decisions—predictive and systemic. While many highway agencies already use these strategies in their safety management processes, FHWA promotes them to state and local agencies for use throughout project development as decisions with safety implications are made.

Predictive approaches combine crash, roadway inventory and traffic volume data to provide more reliable estimates of an existing or proposed road's expected safety performance, such as crash frequency and severity. The estimates can be used in roadway safety management, project development decision-making and safety countermeasure selection.

Systemic approaches identify high-risk features associated with severe crash types—for example, an intersection near a horizontal curve—so improvements can be made at similar locations throughout an agency's roadway system. These techniques are particularly applicable when a significant number of severe crashes occur over a wide area, such as on rural and local roadways.

Road Diet

Roadway reconfiguration, or a road diet, is a low-cost strategy that reallocates a road's cross-section to safely accommodate all users, increase mobility, reduce crashes and improve a community's quality of life.

A common type of road diet involves converting a four-lane, undivided road to three lanes with two through lanes and a two-way turn lane in the middle. The reclaimed space can be allocated to uses such as bike lanes, pedestrian refuge islands and parking. Studies show an overall crash reduction of 19 to 47 percent when a road diet is installed on a four-lane, undivided road.

During each EDC round, FHWA provides technical assistance and training to states to implement the innovations they select. FHWA also offers incentive funding to implement and standardize innovation use through its State Transportation Innovation Council Incentive and Accelerated Innovation Deployment Demonstration programs. ●

This article is by the Center for Accelerating Innovation/ Federal Highway Administration.



Five years after a road diet conversion on Lawyers Road in Reston, Va., a safety study revealed a 70-percent drop in crashes.

Photo Credit: Richard Retting