MPOJC

SAFE STREETS AND ROADS FOR ALL– SAFETY ACTION PLAN

Appendix C Policy and Process

Technical Memorandum

May 2026

Policy and Process Technical Memorandum

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Introduction

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has identified Policy and Process Changes as a key component of Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) comprehensive safety action plans. According to the FHWA, this component should involve “the assessment of current policies, plans, guidelines and/or standards to identify opportunities to improve how processes prioritize transportation safety." This technical memorandum provides details related to the Policy and Process Changes component of the 2026 Metropolitan Planning Organization of Johnson County (MPOJC) Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Safety Action Plan. This includes a review of existing plans and studies relevant to the urbanized MPOJC area and the local jurisdictions of the City of Iowa City, Coralville, North Liberty, University Heights, and Tiffin.

Review of Existing Plans & Studies

There are several existing plans and studies that aim to improve transportation safety within the metropolitan Johnson County area. This includes statewide plans developed through the Iowa Department of Transportation (Iowa DOT), regional plans developed through the MPOJC, and local plans developed by each of the cities in the project area. Each summary below includes an overview of the purpose of each plan and how it relates to safety planning.

Statewide Plans & Studies

Iowa Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP), 2024-2028

The SHSP outlines a comprehensive, data-driven strategy to reduce traffic-related fatalities and serious injuries across all public roads in the state. It adopts the Safe System Approach which focuses on five key areas—Safer People, Safer Roads, Safer Speeds, Safer Vehicles, and Post-Crash Care. The plan emphasizes collaboration among state agencies, local governments, and the public, with a long-term vision of zero fatalities and short-term performance-based targets to guide implementation and evaluation.

Iowa Vulnerable Road User (VRU) Safety Assessment, 2024

The VRU Safety Assessment aims to reduce fatalities and serious injuries among pedestrians, bicyclists, and other non-motorized road users through a data-driven, Safe System Approach. It identifies high-risk locations across urban and rural areas, recommends infrastructure improvements like separated bike lanes and enhanced crosswalks, and outlines strategies for public education and enforcement. The plan also includes stakeholder input and funding opportunities to support implementation, aligning with Iowa’s broader goal of achieving zero traffic fatalities.

Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, 2018/2025 update

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan aims to improve safety, connectivity, and accessibility for bicyclists and pedestrians through a context-sensitive, Complete Streets approach. It identifies priority corridors and gaps in the active transportation network, recommends infrastructure

enhancements like multi-use trails and protected bike lanes, and emphasizes coordination across agencies. The plan also incorporates stakeholder input and outlines funding strategies to support implementation and long-term maintenance.

Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Systemic Safety Analysis, 2020

This analysis identifies roadway and intersection features across Iowa that pose the highest risk for crashes involving pedestrians and bicyclists, using a systemic approach rather than traditional crash frequency analysis. By evaluating over 46,000 miles of roadway and 95,000 intersections, the study provides data-driven insights to help prioritize safety improvements where risk is greatest, even in areas with low crash history.

Regional Plans & Studies

MPOJC Long-Range Transportation Plan, 2022/2023 Amendment

Future Forward 2050 - Connecting Communities, the Long-Range Transportation Plan, addresses safety-related objectives include ensuring complete streets include sidewalks and ADA complaint curb ramps and reducing the number and frequency of fatal and serious injury collisions.

The plan includes the following safety performance measures, shown in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1: Safety Performance Measures from Connecting Communities 2050

PERFORMANCE MEASURE	DEFINITION	DESIRED TREND	BASELINE	2021 PLAN DATA	TREND
Fatalities	Number of motor vehicle fatalities* (5-year total)	↓	24 (metro)	15 (metro) / 342 (state)	↓
	Rate of fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles traveled (VMT)*	↓	0.76 (metro)	0.44 (metro) / 1.019 (state)	↓
Serious Injuries	Number of serious injury accidents* (5-year total)	↓	127 (metro)	134 (metro) / 1,420 (state)	↑
	Rate of serious injury collisions per 100 million VMT*	↓	4.02 (metro)	3.93 (metro) / 4.23 (state)	↓
Nonmotorized Fatalities/Injuries	Number of non-motorized fatalities/serious injuries* (5-year total)	↓	32 (metro)	40 (metro)/132.6 (state)	↑
	Rate of non-motorized fatalities and serious injuries per 100 million VMT	↓	1.016	1.187	↑
Bicycle Collisions	Total Collisions (5-year total)	↓	170	198 (metro)	↑
Pedestrian Collisions	Total Collisions (5-year total)	↓	154	152 (metro)	↓

PERFORMANCE MEASURE	DEFINITION	TRANSIT SYSTEM	SERVICE	DESIRED TREND	BASELINE	TREND
Transit Safety	Total number of reportable fatalities and rate per total vehicle revenue miles (VRM) by mode*	Cambus		No change	0	*New Measure*
		Coralville Transit			0	
		Iowa City Transit			0	
	Total number of reportable injuries and rate per total vehicle revenue miles (VRM) by mode*	Cambus	Fixed Route Bus	↓	6 injuries / 0.9 per 100 k VRM	*New Measure*
			Demand Response		1 injury / 0 per 100 k VRM	
		Coralville Transit	Fixed Route Bus		1 injury / 0.5 per 100 k VRM	
			Demand Response		1 injury / 0.1 per 100 k VRM	
		Iowa City Transit	Fixed Route Bus		2 injuries / 0.28 per 100 k VRM	
			Demand Response		1 injury / 0.1 per 100 k VRM	
	Total number of reportable safety events and rate per total vehicle revenue miles (VRM) by mode.*	Cambus	Fixed Route Bus	↓	75 events / 10 per 100 k VRM	*New Measure*
			Demand Response		3 events / 5 per 100 k VRM	
		Coralville Transit	Fixed Route Bus		1 event / 0.5 per 100 k VRM	
			Demand Response		31 events / 0.1 per 100 k VRM	
		Iowa City Transit	Fixed Route Bus		10 events / 1.43 per 100 k VRM	
			Demand Response		31 events / 0.1 per 100 k VRM	
	Mean distance between major mechanical failures by mode per total vehicle revenue miles (VRM) by mode*	Cambus	Fixed Route Bus	↑	50000 per VRM	*New Measure*
			Demand Response		12500 per VRM	
		Coralville Transit	Fixed Route Bus		8140 per VRM	
			Demand Response		68456 per VRM	
		Iowa City Transit	Fixed Route Bus		35000 per VRM	
			Demand Response		68456 per VRM	

MPOJC Urbanized Area Traffic Collision Analysis, 2020-2022

The MPOJC traffic collision analysis report identifies high crash locations within the MPOJC urbanized area between 2020 and 2022. This report aims to increase awareness of crash causes and identify and implement countermeasures. All intersections and mid-block locations were evaluated; however, only locations with three or more collisions were included in the report. Each location was ranked using the Iowa DOT Office of Traffic Safety weighted formula, which has three data points: number of collisions (weighted at 25%), crash rate (weighted at 25%), and severity of collisions (weighted at 50%).

Metro Area Bicycle Master Plan, 2020

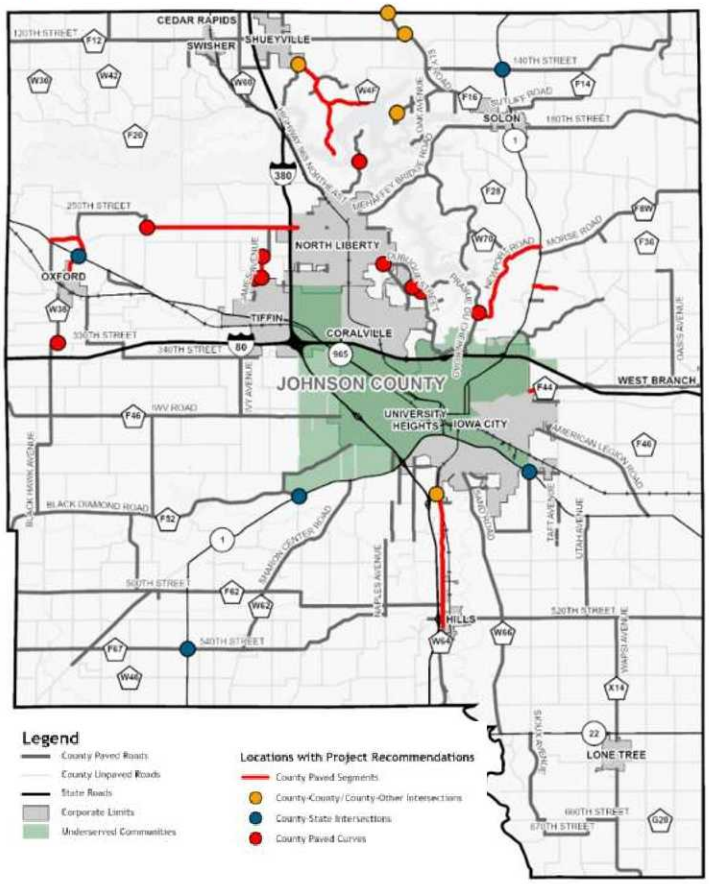
The Metro Area Bicycle Master Plan outlines a vision for a safe and connected bicycle network across Coralville, North Liberty, Tiffin, and University Heights, and emphasizes infrastructure expansion and community engagement. It uses a "6 E's" framework - Engineering, Education, Encouragement, Enforcement, Evaluation, and Equity - to guide improvements in facilities, safety, and bicycle culture. The plan also highlights the role of bicycling in economic development and tourism, aiming to make cycling a viable and attractive transportation option for all residents.

Local Plans & Studies

Johnson County Comprehensive Safety Action Plan, 2025

The study area for this plan included the non-urbanized areas of Johnson County. The goal was to assist local jurisdictions with improving roads and streets under their maintenance. The plan includes engineering and driver-related countermeasures along with prioritized locations and specific safety projects for county-owned roads. The plan includes detailed project sheets with infrastructure countermeasure recommendations to reduce potential for fatal and serious injury crashes at priority locations.

Figure 2: Johnson County Priority Projects



Coralville Community Plan, 2014

The Coralville Community Plan emphasizes expanding a safe, connected network for walking and biking to link neighborhoods, schools, parks and regional trails. It calls for development of sidewalks, shared-use trails, and on-street bike facilities to close gaps and better connect to regional systems like the Iowa River Trail. The Plan also prioritizes ADA-accessible crossings, enhanced wayfinding, and continuity of pedestrian and bicycle routes to make non-motorized travel more efficient, comfortable, and appealing. Together, these strategies support Coralville's goal of promoting active, healthy, and sustainable transportation options for its residents.

Coralville West Land Use Area Master Plan, 2016

The Coralville West Land Use Area Plan provides the framework for guiding future growth and development in the city's western district and establishes the basis for zoning through its Future Land Use Map. The plan integrates land use, transportation, infrastructure, and urban design strategies to create a vibrant, mixed-use environment. It includes detailed Design Guidelines to ensure high-quality, pedestrian-oriented development, coordinated streetscapes, and consistent architectural character across new Planned Unit Developments. It also incorporates stormwater, sanitary sewer, and water infrastructure analysis to ensure that future growth occurs

sustainably. The resulting master plan promotes a connected, walkable district with a mix of residential, commercial, and corporate office uses linked by a network of collector streets, trails, and green corridors that balance urban development with Coralville's natural features.

Coralville ADA Transition Plan, 2019

The City of Coralville's ADA Transition Plan establishes a structured process to ensure pedestrian facilities, including public transit bus stops, within the public right-of-way comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The plan identifies physical barriers that limit accessibility, outlines the methods and schedule for removing those barriers, and designates an ADA Coordinator responsible for implementation. It also includes a grievance procedure for addressing accessibility concerns and emphasizes public involvement and community awareness. Beyond meeting the minimum federal requirements under 28 CFR 35.150, the City commits to ongoing monitoring, reporting, and periodic updates to maintain full ADA compliance and continuously improve accessibility for all users.

Coralville Comprehensive Trail Plan, 2020

The Coralville Comprehensive Trail Plan provides a long-term vision for enhancing and expanding the city's trail network, while recognizing trails as both vital community amenities and key components of the regional transportation system. The plan evaluates existing conditions, inventories current facilities, and documents the history of trail development in Coralville, which includes over 38 miles of trails and sidepaths, 20 miles of which are separated recreational trails. It integrates public input, identifies future trail connections, and outlines maintenance standards to ensure system longevity. As Coralville continues to grow, the plan envisions an additional 40 miles of trails that will strengthen links between neighborhoods, parks, and community destinations, and provide regional connectivity with Iowa City, North Liberty, Tiffin, and the University of Iowa.

Iowa City Comprehensive Plan, 2013/2026 update

The Iowa City Comprehensive Plan is currently undergoing an update. The 2013 version of the Comprehensive Plan highlights the importance of a connected, safe, and accessible active transportation network for residents of all ages and abilities. The plan calls for expanding sidewalks, multi-use trails, and designated bicycle routes to link neighborhoods, schools, parks, and commercial centers. Emphasis is placed on ADA-compliant crossings, wayfinding improvements, and enhanced pedestrian and cyclist safety to make non-motorized travel convenient and comfortable. The plan also supports regional connectivity, integrating local routes with larger systems such as the Iowa River Trail and other regional trails.

Iowa City Bicycle Master Plan, 2017

The Iowa City Bicycle Master Plan outlines a comprehensive strategy to improve bicycle infrastructure, safety, and culture in Iowa City, aiming to achieve Gold-Level Bicycle Friendly Community status. It recommends over 100 miles of bikeways, prioritizes equity and connectivity, and includes detailed implementation plans, cost estimates, and performance metrics to guide development through 2027.

North Liberty Connected to Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan, 2023

North Liberty's Connected to Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan emphasizes expanding and enhancing North Liberty's active transportation network to promote connectivity and accessibility for all residents. Key initiatives include developing a comprehensive system of sidewalks, trails, and on-street bicycle facilities to connect neighborhoods, schools, parks, and commercial areas. The plan also prioritizes safe crossings, ADA-compliant infrastructure, and wayfinding signage to ensure a seamless and inclusive multimodal transportation experience. Additionally, the plan supports regional connectivity by integrating local facilities with regional trails, such as the North Ridge Trail, which links to Coralville and the Iowa River Trail.

North Liberty Trails Plan, 2009

The North Liberty Trails Network Plan establishes a comprehensive framework for expanding and maintaining the city's off-road trails and wide sidewalks, creating a connected and accessible system for pedestrians and bicyclists. The plan identifies approximately 22.3 miles of new and existing corridors that link neighborhoods, parks, and key community destinations while minimizing long-term maintenance costs. It sets design standards and outlines a maintenance policy that includes snow removal and facility renovation. The network builds upon existing infrastructure to form a robust, looped system that encourages recreation and active transportation, helping residents reduce short automobile trips. The plan is intended to evolve with future development, with most new trail segments constructed by developers as part of ongoing growth and redevelopment.

Tiffin Comprehensive Plan, 2018

Tiffin's 2018 Comprehensive Plan addresses transportation for the city, including topics of connectivity and safety. This includes a policy to encourage pedestrian/bike trails and greenway linkages to existing trail systems. This policy is described as including sidewalks with all new developments. Another policy is that the transportation system should connect neighborhoods to one another.

University Heights Comprehensive Plan, 2020

The University Heights Comprehensive Plan emphasizes enhancing pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure to support safe and accessible travel throughout the community. Key strategies include implementing design improvements to Melrose Avenue with bicycle lanes, wide sidewalks, enhanced crosswalks, street lighting, and traffic calming. The plan also prioritizes sidewalk installation and street pavement improvements citywide, while balancing pedestrian needs with on-street parking for residents. Additionally, coordination with the University of Iowa and surrounding communities is encouraged to maintain safe and efficient game day traffic, parking, and pedestrian circulation.

Existing Policies & Design Standards

In addition to plans and studies, there are policies and design guidelines which inform how the region's streets, bikeways, and sidewalks are designed, constructed, and maintained.

Statewide Policies & Design Standards

Iowa's Statewide Urban Design and Specifications Manual

The Iowa Statewide Urban Design and Specifications (SUDAS) manual provides a uniform standard for public improvements, maintained by the Institute for Transportation at Iowa State University. Several agencies within MPOJC follow the guidelines set by SUDAS, including Coralville, Tiffin, and University Heights. Both Iowa City and North Liberty have submitted a supplement to the design guidelines, with small adjustments to certain specifications. However, these specifications do not address safety countermeasures.

Iowa DOT Standards

The Iowa DOT developed a statewide Design Manual, which includes standardized design features, construction methods, and approved materials. The Design Manual includes design standards for safety countermeasures including shoulders and curbs, medians and median crossings, roundabouts, sight distance, and pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

Iowa DOT Traffic Incident Management (TIM) Service Layer Plan, 2018

The TIM Service Layer Plan was developed under the Iowa DOT's Transportation Systems Management and Operations (TSMO) program. This plan aims to identify strategies that keep existing infrastructure operating at its optimal service level, meanwhile utilizing TIM through safe and timely management of highway incidents. A safety-related objective is to reduce the number of secondary crashes caused by traffic incidents.

Iowa DOT Potential for Crash Reduction Map

The Iowa DOT maintains a Potential for Crash Reduction (PCR) dashboard designed to identify and prioritize highway segments and intersections with the greatest potential for safety improvements. It utilizes Safety Performance Functions (SPFs), which are statistical models that estimate expected number of crashes based on traffic volume and roadway characteristics. This tool can guide investment decisions and improve roadway safety statewide.

Regional Policies & Design Standards

MPOJC Complete Streets Policy, 2015

MPOJC's Complete Streets policy only applies to projects that use federal Surface Transportation Program and Transportation Alternative Program funds. The policy mandates that new and reconstructed streets incorporate features like sidewalks, bike lanes, bus stops, and ADA-compliant facilities, while allowing exceptions only under specific, documented conditions. Performance is tracked through metrics such as miles of bike lanes added, pedestrian accommodations built, and annual transit ridership.

Local Policies & Design Standards

Iowa City Complete Streets Policy

Iowa City's Complete Streets policy mandates that all new and reconstructed streets be designed to safely accommodate all users—regardless of age, ability, or mode of transportation—through inclusive planning, design, and maintenance practices. It emphasizes context-sensitive design, interagency collaboration, and measurable performance outcomes, while allowing limited exceptions under specific, documented conditions.

Coralville Complete Streets Policy, 2016

Coralville's Complete Streets policy ensures that new and reconstructed streets safely serve drivers, pedestrians, cyclists, and transit riders. The policy integrates sidewalks, ADA-compliant ramps, bike lanes, and accessible bus stops consistent with regional transportation and accessibility plans. Maintenance projects incorporate feasible upgrades like restriping or signage, supporting a more connected, multimodal network citywide.

Municipal Survey Results

To better understand the current state of safety planning and implementation across the MPOJC urbanized areas, a survey was distributed to municipal staff from the MPO's member communities. The survey assessed existing plans and policies, safety implementation measures, speed management strategies, and perceived barriers to safety improvements. The results provide a snapshot of institutional capacity and readiness to advance a regional SS4A initiative. Responses reflect internal staff perspectives and are intended to guide future coordination and technical assistance needs.

Survey responses indicate that most MPO member communities have adopted at least some foundational policies that support multimodal safety and design. Iowa City and Coralville have implemented Complete Streets Policies and Active Transportation Plans, demonstrating a mature policy framework for multimodal infrastructure. Iowa City also stands out as the only municipality with supplemental street design standards beyond SUDAS, suggesting greater internal capacity for context-sensitive design. Smaller municipalities such as North Liberty and Tiffin have also incorporated Active Transportation Plans, but University Heights has not yet formalized safety or multimodal design policies. These findings suggest opportunities for the MPO to support consistency and policy development across jurisdictions.

Table 1: Existing Plans and Policies by Municipality

Municipality	Complete Streets Policy	Active Transportation Plan	Street Design Standards other than SUDAS
Coralville	X	X	
Iowa City	X	X	X
North Liberty		X	

Tiffin		X	
University Heights			

Implementation of safety-related goals and committees varies widely among jurisdictions. Iowa City, North Liberty, and University Heights have established transportation safety goals within their comprehensive or transportation-related plans. All jurisdictions surveyed require sidewalks in new developments, showing integration of safety principles in planning and land development. Coralville and Tiffin also require sidewalks but lack formalized safety goals or committees.

Table 2: Existing Safety Planning Guidance by Municipality

Municipality	Transportation safety goals and/or performance measures in Comprehensive Plan or MTP	Transportation safety projects included in Comprehensive Plan or MTP	Sidewalks required in new developments or roadway projects
Coralville			X
Iowa City	X		X
North Liberty	X		X
Tiffin			X
University Heights	X	X	X

North Liberty and University Heights currently maintain traffic safety committees; both include city staff, and University Heights also includes elected officials. The University Heights committee also addresses complete streets along with traffic safety. Only Iowa City has an active transportation advisory committee, which is made up of members of the public. Overall, additional coordination, technical guidance, and data-sharing through the MPO could strengthen local implementation capacity.

Table 3: Existing Transportation Committees by Municipality

Municipality	Traffic safety committee	Complete streets committee	Active transportation advisory committee
Coralville			
Iowa City			X
North Liberty	X		
Tiffin			
University Heights	X	X	

Various speed management strategies are implemented across the MPO region. Iowa City employs the broadest range of tools that reflect a comprehensive approach to speed reduction including traffic calming infrastructure, reduced speed limits, lane narrowing, intersection design adjustments, speed feedback signs, and educational campaigns. All communities have

implemented speed feedback signs and all but Tiffin have lowered speed limits. The range of responses highlight opportunities for regional consistency in speed management practices and for shared evaluation of which measures are most effective in different urban and suburban contexts.

Table 4: Speed Management Strategies by Municipality

Municipality	Traffic calming	Lower speed limits	Narrow travel lanes	Tighter turning radii	Added speed limit signs	Speed feed-back signs	Increase Police patrol	Mobile speed radar units	Campaign to encourage slower driving
Coralville	X	X				X			
Iowa City	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
North Liberty	X	X			X	X	X		X
Tiffin						X		X	
University Heights		X				X	X	X	

Municipalities identified funding and staffing limitations as the most significant barriers to implementing roadway safety improvements. Coralville, Iowa City, and Tiffin report both funding and staffing constraints. Respondents also noted right-of-way limitations as a factor constraining physical improvements. These findings suggest that regional collaboration, particularly shared resources for data analysis, design guidance, and grant preparation, will be critical to advancing the MPO's Safety Action Plan recommendations.

Table 5: Biggest Obstacles to Implementing Safety Improvements by Municipality

Municipality	Lack of funding	Lack of staff availability	Lack of staff expertise	Lack of available road right-of-way	Traffic studies do not support additional safety measures
Coralville	X	X	X	X	
Iowa City	X	X			
North Liberty	X				
Tiffin		X		X	
University Heights					X

All responding communities coordinate transportation safety initiatives and information through the MPOJC Transportation Technical Advisory Committee, which serves as the primary forum for regional discussion and planning. Most also engage with the Regional Trails and Bicycle Committee and the Urbanized Area Policy Board to address multimodal safety and connectivity issues. Only North Liberty and University Heights have regularly scheduled recurring meetings to discuss transportation safety initiatives. Iowa City, Tiffin, and University Heights schedule

meetings as needed. Together, these collaborative structures ensure consistent communication and alignment on transportation safety priorities across the region.

Table 6: Communication and Coordination of Transportation Safety Initiatives

Municipality	MPOJC Urbanized Area Policy Board	MPOJC Transportation Technical Advisory Committee	MPOJC Regional Trails and Bicycle Committee	Regularly Scheduled Recurring Meetings	Meetings as Needed
Coralville		X			
Iowa City		X	X		X
North Liberty	X	X	X	X	
Tiffin	X	X	X		X
University Heights	X	X	X	X	X

Overall, the municipal staff survey reveals that while several MPOJC communities, particularly Iowa City and Coralville, have established strong foundations for multimodal safety through policies and plans, implementation capacity varies across the region. Most jurisdictions face common challenges related to limited funding and staff capacity, which constrain their ability to advance safety projects. Speed management practices and safety committees are not yet consistent among member communities, underscoring the need for regional coordination, shared resources, and technical support to strengthen a unified approach to roadway safety.