

Project Description

The Kankakee Iroquois Regional Planning Commission (KIRPC) is completing a Safety Action Plan for the region that includes eight counties in northwest Indiana. KIRPC is a regional planning commission established under Indiana Code as a special purpose district of local government. The eight counties included in KIRPC are Benton, Carroll, Jasper, Newton, Pulaski, Starke, Warren, and White. The total population for the area is 144,786 people.

The goal of the project is to significantly reduce or eliminate roadway fatalities and serious injuries. The scope of the proposed Safety Action Plan is to provide general information, safety enhancement techniques, evaluation procedures and general guidance for making decisions relative to improving roadway safety in the KIRPC Region.

The planning process will include the following data analysis, stakeholder input meetings in each county, goals and recommendations, a draft plan, a stakeholder presentation of the draft plan in each county, and the final plan. Safety partners in each county will be identified to participate in the planning process. These will include county governments, municipal governments, local transportation departments both county and municipal, the regional planning commission, Indiana Department of Transportation, Indiana Local Technical Assistance Program, local schools, local law enforcement, state law enforcement, local emergency services, and others.

Roadway safety issues

KIRPC serves a primarily rural area in northwest Indiana. With a fatality rate of 23.345 per 100,000 people and 53% of the population living in underserved communities, the KIRPC region is vulnerable and needs a Safety Action Plan to lower the number of roadway fatalities and serious injuries involving various road users.

Supplemental Planning Activities

In order to better inform the development of the Safety Action Plan, the plan development will include the completion of one road safety audit in each of the eight participating counties. Each county will identify a location that has a high number of accidents and a road safety audit will be completed for each site. The aim of the road safety audit is to identify what elements of the road may present a safety concern and what opportunities exist to eliminate or mitigate the identified safety concerns.

A Road Safety Audit (RSA) is the formal safety performance examination of an existing or future road or intersection by an independent, multidisciplinary team. It qualitatively estimates and reports on potential road safety issues and identifies opportunities for improvements in safety for all road users. It is hoped that information gained from the intense study of these problem areas within the region will not only provide improvements for those specific locations but will provide possible solutions to consider for other spots in the safety action plan.