

PERFORMANCE AUDIT
 The Highway Safety Improvement Program
 Montana Department of Transportation

OCTOBER 2012

12P-07

REPORT SUMMARY

The Montana Department of Transportation (department) should evaluate the Highway Safety Improvement Program to ensure the \$80 million in state and federal funds obligated to safety projects results in a reduction in traffic fatalities and serious injuries on public roads in Montana.

Context

The Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) is a federal-aid program of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users, which is a 2005 federal funding and authorization bill that governs U.S. federal surface transportation spending. On an annual basis, the department identifies locations on Montana’s public roads where public safety could be increased through the installation of a safety improvement, such as lighting, chevrons, guardrails, and rumble strips. While the scale of projects is generally small, larger projects such as the installation of a roundabout may also be considered for an HSIP project. Since inception of the program, the department has approved 304 HSIP projects. Since 2005, over \$80 million in state and federal funding has been obligated by the program.

Audit work examined how the department implements the HSIP and assesses if the program results in reductions in fatalities and serious injuries on public roads. Audit work identified the need for the department to evaluate the HSIP in order to ensure that the program is achieving intended results and project investments are reducing fatalities and serious injuries.

As part of audit work, we also determined that internal controls for the program could be improved. Information on the status or completion of HSIP projects is not readily available. At present, the department does

not track the status of HSIP projects in order to demonstrate that projects are completed as planned. For example, of the 66 projects the department prioritized for completion in 2005, information on the status or a date of completion for 79 percent of those projects was not documented.

Results

Audit recommendations address the need for the department to evaluate the HSIP and strengthen internal controls for the program. Recommendations include:

- ◆ Comply with federal regulations by analyzing and assessing how the program reduces the number of crashes, fatalities and serious injuries, or potential crashes on public roads in Montana; and
- ◆ Strengthen internal controls for the program to track and document the status and completion of HSIP projects.

Recommendation Concurrence	
Concur	2
Partially Concur	0
Do Not Concur	0
Source: Agency audit response included in final report.	