

Chapter 18

Highways and Infrastructure—Road Safety Concerns on Existing Highways

1.0 MAIN POINTS

By November 2019, the Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure had improved its processes to address safety concerns raised on existing provincial highways by implementing the last recommendation we originally made in 2015.

The Ministry continued to report to senior management Safety Improvement Program (SIP) projects completed over the last five years costing more than \$1 million. The Ministry expanded its reporting to include projects that did not prove to reduce collisions (e.g., installation of an electronic radar sign).

The reports provided an evaluation of whether SIP helps reduce the frequency and severity of highway collisions.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

The Ministry is responsible for managing the Province's 26,184 kilometres of highways, including maintaining safe road conditions as described in *The Highways and Transportation Act, 1997*.¹

Our *2015 Report – Volume 2*, Chapter 35 concluded, for the period from September 1, 2014 to August 31, 2015, the Ministry had effective processes to address safety concerns raised on existing provincial highways other than the matters reflected in four recommendations.² Our *2018 Report – Volume 1*, Chapter 22 concluded the Ministry implemented three of those four recommendations.³

This chapter describes our second follow-up of management's actions on the remaining recommendation about giving senior management periodic reports whether the Safety Improvement Program helped reduce the frequency and severity of collisions.

To conduct this follow-up audit, we followed the standards for assurance engagements published in the *CPA Canada Handbook—Assurance* (CSAE 3001). To evaluate the Ministry's progress towards meeting our recommendation, we used the relevant criteria from the original audit. The Ministry agreed with the criteria in the original audit.

We interviewed Ministry staff responsible and reviewed documentation supporting the Safety Improvement Program.

¹ *The Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure Annual Report for 2018-19*, p. 3.

² The original report regarding these recommendations can be found at auditor.sk.ca/publications/public-reports. We reported the original audit work in *2015 Report – Volume 2*, Chapter 35, pp. 205 - 218.

³ *2018 Report – Volume 1*, Chapter 22, pp. 259-261.



3.0 STATUS OF RECOMMENDATION

This section sets out the date on which the Standing Committee on Public Accounts agreed to the recommendation, the status of the recommendation at November 30, 2019, and the Ministry's actions up to that date.

3.1 Periodic Reports on Road Safety Effectiveness Improved

We recommended that the Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure give senior management periodic reports on whether its road safety improvement program helped reduce the frequency and severity of collisions. (2015 Report – Volume 2, p. 216, Recommendation 4; Public Accounts Committee agreement September 15, 2016)

Status – Implemented

By November 2019, the Ministry had increased the types of Safety Improvement Program (SIP) projects and related collision data in its annual reports to senior management.

Based on its May 2018 assessment, the Ministry decided to add reporting on unproven SIP projects (e.g., installing an electronic radar sign in a high collision corridor) to the data previously reported to senior management. By adding unproven SIP projects to senior management reporting, the Ministry doubled the number of projects being reported on. This addition helps senior management assess if the unproven projects are effective in reducing the frequency and severity of collisions.

Previously, the Ministry only reported collision data on SIP projects that exceeded \$1 million or had a high public profile. It continues to report this information.

We found senior management received sufficient information annually to help them assess the effectiveness of SIP. See **Figure 1** for types of information reported to senior management in July 2019.

Figure 1—Content of July 2019 Safety Improvement Report to Senior Management

For each project:

- Yearly collision statistics (number of collisions and number of collisions where there were injuries or fatalities) of the highway area before and after the improvement had been implemented
- An analysis of the statistics
- A conclusion on the effectiveness of the safety improvement

Source: Adapted from Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure data.