

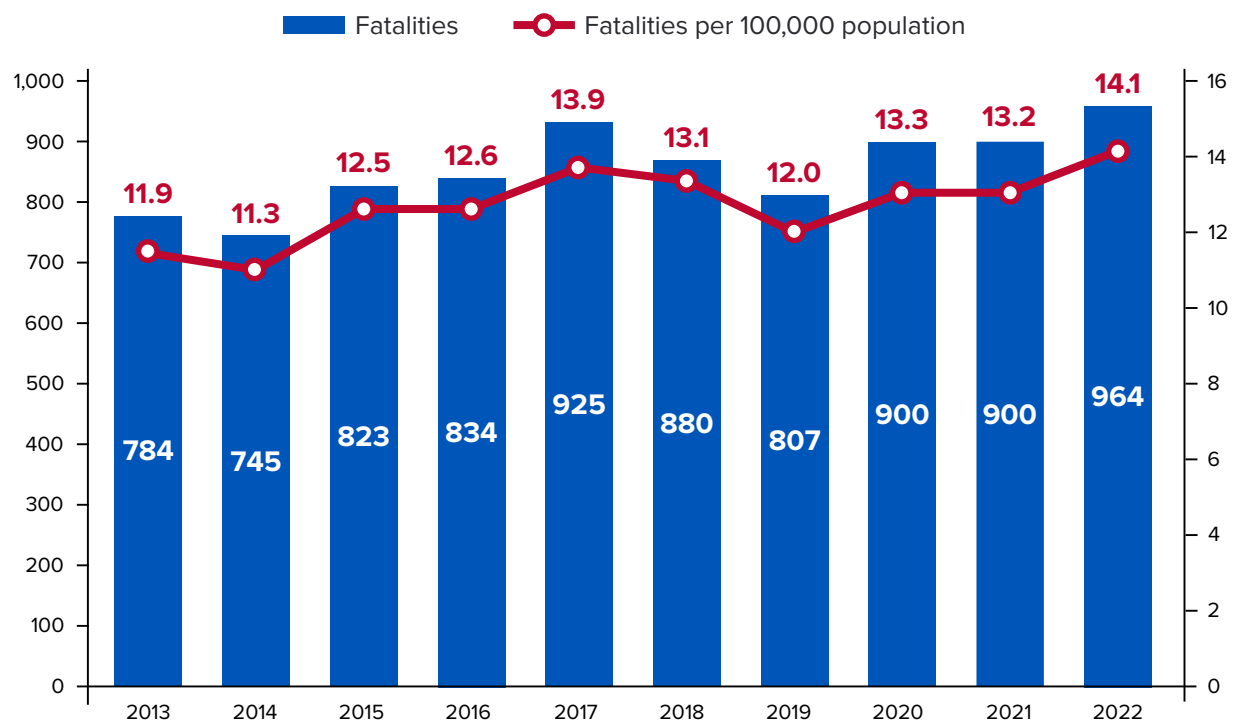
2. INTRODUCTION



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According to the Indiana University Public Policy Institute, in partnership with the Indiana Criminal Justice Institute, Indiana, recent years have witnessed an alarming rise in traffic fatality rates. There were 964 traffic fatalities in Indiana in 2022, up from 900 in 2021. Traffic fatalities have risen in recent years to 14.1 per 100,000 of the state's population – marking a 10-year high. As shown in **Figure 1**, over the last few years, the fatality rates have increased steadily since reaching a five-year low of 12.0 per 100,000 population in 2019.¹

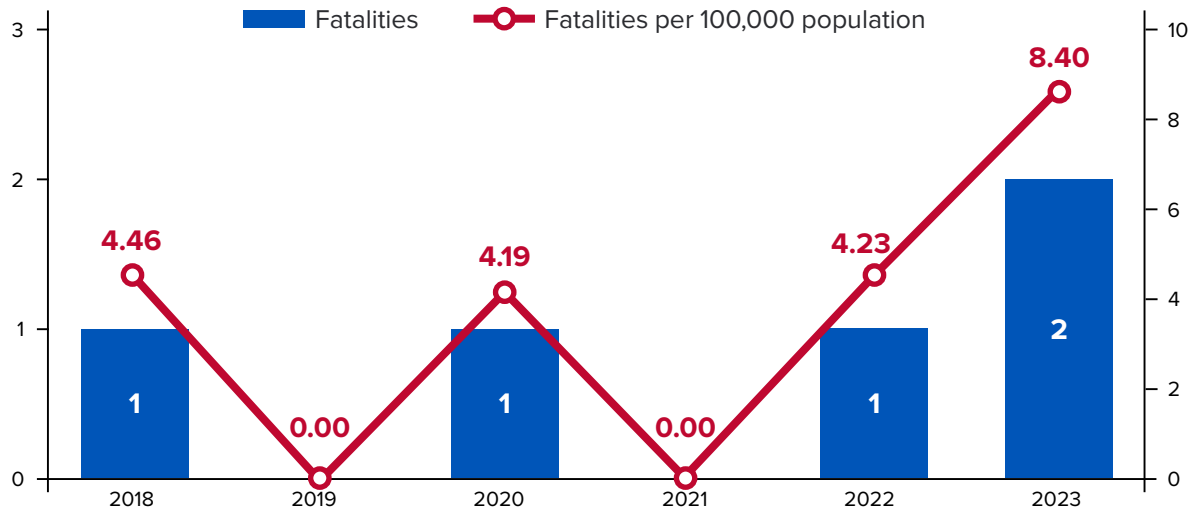
Figure 1: Total Fatalities and Fatality Rate in Indiana, 2013-2022



¹ Source: [2022 Indiana Crash Fact Book](#)

Figure 2 shows the fatality statistics in the Town of Highland, Indiana between 2018 and 2023. While these numbers may be lower than the rest of the state, the trend shows that traffic fatalities are not likely to decrease in the Town of Highland without intervention, indicating that action is necessary.

Figure 2: Total Fatalities and Fatality Rate in Highland, Indiana, 2018-2023



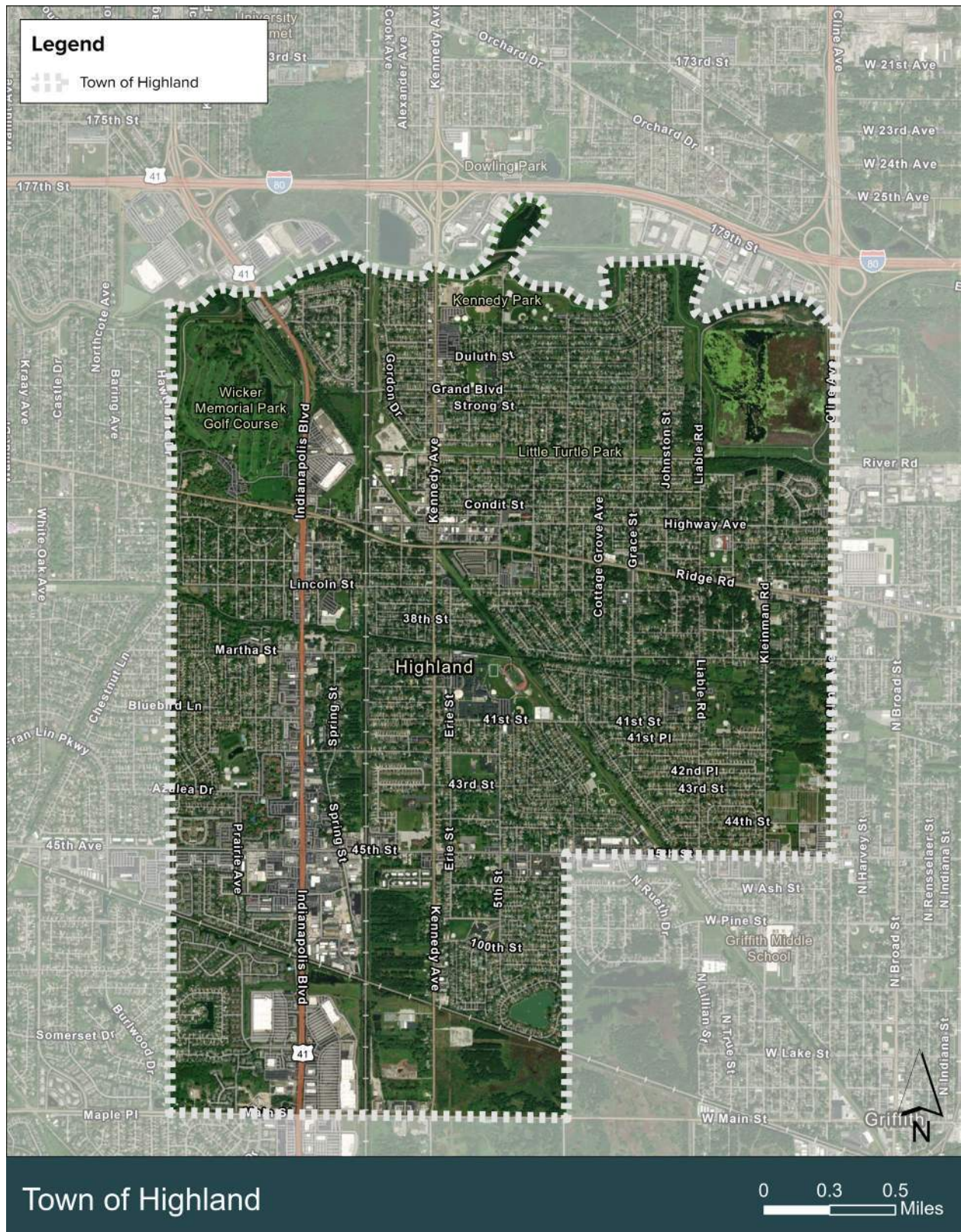
Carefully selected evidence-based practices and policies can help reverse the course. To do so, we will need to comprehensively study and improve the street designs, social factors, built environment, vehicle standards, and technologies that underlie the worsening traffic safety decline in the state and the Town of Highland.

2.1 ABOUT THE TOWN OF HIGHLAND

Highland, located in Lake County, Indiana, is a vibrant community with a population of 23,984 as of the 2020 census. Incorporated on April 4, 1910, Highland is part of the Chicago metropolitan area and North Township. It is bordered by Hammond to the north, Munster to the west, Schererville to the south, and Griffith to the east.

The town's downtown area showcases several buildings in the Mid-Century Modern architectural style, adding a unique character to the community. Highland is conveniently situated just south of Indianapolis Boulevard, a major north-south corridor within a 20-mile radius of several Interstate and US highways, enhancing regional connectivity. The Erie Lackawanna Trail is a key amenity for pedestrians and cyclists. This paved, multi-use rail trail cuts diagonally through Highland, linking the town to nearby Griffith and Crown Point to the southeast.

Figure 3: City of Lawrence – City Boundary



2.2 SAFE STREETS AND ROADS FOR ALL AND VISION ZERO

When the federal government passed the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) in late 2021, one of the most notable new programs was Safe Streets and Roads for All—commonly abbreviated as “SS4A.” SS4A commits large amounts of federal funding toward transforming the safety of corridors, municipalities, and regions through a series of planning and implementation grants. A fundamental component of SS4A is its alignment with a Vision Zero approach to safety. Vision Zero is based on the principle that it is not acceptable that people are killed or seriously injured when moving throughout the transportation network. Simply put, Vision Zero is a commitment to move toward zero deaths. This initiative recognizes that the responsibility for a safe transportation network is shared between users and transportation system designers and that behavioral and design issues are both important to understand and address. The Town of Highland strongly supports a Vision Zero approach to safety.

Communities seeking SS4A funding must have a compliant Safety Action Plan. A significant portion of the overall SS4A program is devoted to funding Action Plans. The Town of Highland was awarded the FY 23 SS4A Planning grant to create a comprehensive safety action plan. The Town engaged American Structurepoint Inc. to create an action plan following all required and suggested SS4A Action Plan components.

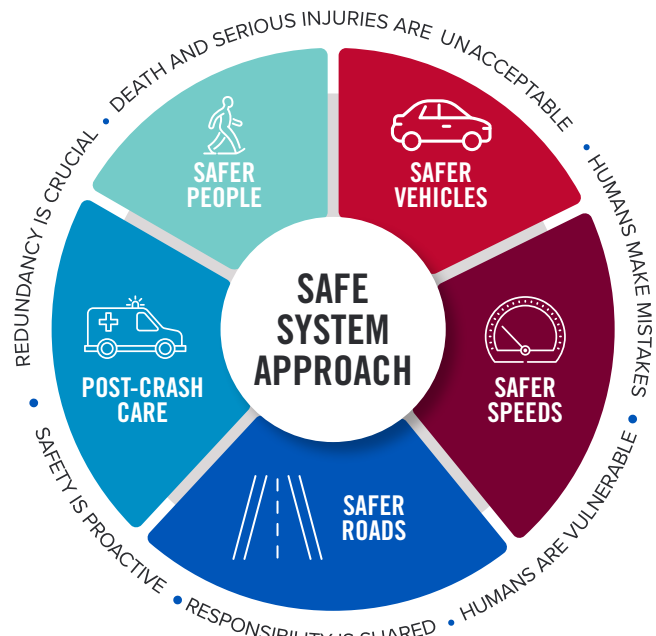
With the adoption of this plan by the Council, Highland can pursue SS4A Demonstration and Implementation Grants. This grant can fund various safety projects and strategies identified in this Action Plan that address roadway safety problems. This plan will also identify the tools and policy changes needed to achieve the vision zero goal.

2.2.1 THE SAFE SYSTEM APPROACH

Highland’s response to address traffic safety concerns will incorporate the Safe System approach embraced by the US Department of Transportation (DOT). The Safe System Approach focuses on human mistakes and vulnerability, incorporating redundancies to prevent crashes and minimize harm. The US DOT’s National Roadway Safety Strategy and ongoing safety programs are aligned with the goal of achieving zero roadway fatalities and serious injuries. These programs target various aspects, including infrastructure, human behavior, responsible vehicle and transportation industry oversight, and emergency response, to create a comprehensive framework for making roadways safer.

The principles and elements of a safe system, presented in **Figure 4**, summarize the Town’s approach to creating safe streets for all moving forward.

Figure 4: Safe System Principles and Elements



2.3 A COMPREHENSIVE SAFETY PLAN

The key components of the Comprehensive Safety Action Plan as outlined in the SS4A Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) are detailed in the following sections.

- **Section 3:** Provides the composition of the project team and task force/steering committee overseeing the action plan development and guiding future implementation.
- **Section 4:** Review and summarize existing crash data, where fatality crashes occur, the population involved, and behavioral characteristics of crashes. Additionally, establishes a High-Injury Network (HIN) and Hotspot locations methodology that evaluates the Town's roadway segments and intersections with a higher number of severe crashes.
- **Section 5:** Summarizes the results of public outreach efforts and the relevance of public input to the planning process.
- **Section 6:** Demonstrates the safety action plan's efforts to consider equity as part of the planning process by analyzing the underserved populations and understanding the relationship between severe crashes and underserved population communities.
- **Section 7:** Documents the Town's current plans and policies that were reviewed to identify opportunities for improvements concerning safety.
- **Section 8:** Lists the suggested improvements/considerations that can be made to the existing Town policies towards road safety.
- **Section 9:** Establishes a framework to recommend and prioritize a list of potential safety projects by considering the existing HIN/Hotspot intersections, equity analysis results, and public feedback. Additionally, this section recommends a variety of other non-project strategic improvements that improve safety by changing and identifying the responsible stakeholders to implement these efforts.
- **Section 10:** Details how the plan will be updated in the future, how the Town's effectiveness at implementing the plan will be measured, and how these efforts will be demonstrated to the public and stakeholders.

2.4 HIGHLAND'S COMMITMENT TO SAFE STREETS FOR ALL

The CSAP serves as a detailed roadmap outlining specific strategies, actions, and projects that the Town of Highland will implement in the coming years and beyond to enhance safety across the community. In December 2024, the Town of Highland adopted a Vision Zero resolution, aiming to achieve a 40% reduction in fatal and serious injury crashes by 2040. This resolution underscores the Town's dedication to prioritizing safety as a fundamental aspect of urban planning and development. The resolution is included in **Appendix A** of this report.

With this plan, Highland is taking its first step towards addressing current safety concerns and laying the foundation for a safer future. By implementing targeted strategies and initiatives, the Town aims to create a transportation system that is safe, accessible, and equitable for all residents, visitors, and road users.