

New Hampshire DOT Road Safety Audits



A Road Safety Audit (RSA) is a formal safety performance examination of an existing intersection by an Independent Audit team.

The Audit team is made from a diverse group of stakeholders representing multiple disciplines and may include local officials such as police and fire chiefs; business and land owners adjacent to the site; NHDOT engineering staff such; and a Facilitator (typically a Consultant hired by the NHDOT) to conduct the RSA.

The Road Safety Audit typically takes three hours, which includes the presentation, site visit and suggestions/ discussions for options. Depending on the specific issues involved the road safety audit may take place in the morning, afternoon and/or evening. The Facilitator compiles the suggestions in a report. The resulting RSA report will generally recommend short, medium, and long term solutions, identifying the party(ies) responsible for implementing them. Short and medium term solutions can often be implemented within normal maintenance or operations programs. Long term solutions would generally require some measure of capital improvement that would need to be included within a transportation improvement program.

Everyone at the RSA meeting receives an email copy of the report. The Facilitator also develops concepts on an aerial plan, based upon the short, medium and long term solutions recommended by the RSA team. The road safety audit and the concepts are reviewed with the NHDOT front office staff and the Town for approval.

Funding of improvements is determined through the evaluation of several factors and may require some level of town participation. Factors looked at in determining potential improvement funding sources and levels include: ownership of roadway, magnitude of cost, safety benefits anticipated, and priorities of the program. The Federal 'Highway Safety Improvement Program' funds managed by the NHDOT may fund a number of improvements based on these factors as well as other Department concerns. Two key factors in determining if the HSIP program can support potential improvement using HSIP funds is the benefit cost ratio for the particular improvement and the demands on the funds for other safety improvements being considered in other locations around the State. This determination generally happens after the audit has occurred and State HSIP program officials have evaluated the factors stated.

Benefits of an RSA program:

- RSAs pro-actively address safety
- RSA audited designs should produce fewer, less severe crashes
- RSAs identify low-cost/high –value improvements
- RSAs enhance consistency in how safety is considered and promote a “safety culture”
- RSAs provide continuous feedback on safety issues for future projects
- RSA support optimized savings of money, time and most importantly lives.