



Memorandum

TO: TRANSPORTATION &
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

FROM: Councilmember Raul Peralez

SUBJECT: VISION ZERO STATUS
REPORT

DATE: March 4, 2022

Approved by:

Date: 03/04/22

RECOMMENDATION

Cross-reference staff's presentation to full City Council with the following additional direction:

1. Continue the Vision Zero Task Force and work collaboratively with the County on increasing data sharing as well as their active transportation plan.
2. Direct City Staff to evaluate the effectiveness of all traffic safety projects implemented since adoption of the 2019 Vision Zero Action Plan. Furthermore, increase staffing resources, through the upcoming budget process if needed, to expedite data analysis and project evaluation as well as conducting synchro analysis related to recommendation #5.
3. Direct SJPD's Traffic Enforcement Unit to provide annually to the PSFSS and T&E committee an update on traffic enforcement activities including staffing levels.
4. Apply AB43 to the full extent possible to effectively allow radar speed enforcement on all eligible roadways.
5. Explore in the future amending the General Plan for street typologies generally with a high volume of automobile lanes such as grand boulevards and city connector streets to allow for repurposing or reduction of traffic lanes, as well as redesigning wide streets.
 - a. Initiate a pilot on a Priority Safety Corridor (PSC) in the 2022-2023 fiscal year to understand the efficacy of a lane reduction on that street typology.
6. Direct the City Manager in the upcoming budget cycle to explore

- a. Increasing FTE resources for project management of various grant funded initiatives such as the OTS-funded walk audits, fatality and citywide collision reviews to ensure resulting recommendations are being implemented, where feasible.
- b. Developing a Vision Zero post-incident protocol that addresses community engagement, data collection and policy development similar to the Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force's incident protocol.
- c. Funding/grant opportunities and, if needed, allocate match funding to maintain existing quick-build projects or convert to permanent infrastructure where warranted, such as protected bike lanes.

BACKGROUND

In 2019, following one of the deadliest years in San José's streets in terms of traffic fatalities, our City Council approved a comprehensive and bold Vision Zero action plan. Since the adoption of that plan, ongoing implementation of the plan has produced results such as the formation of a multi-agency Task Force, onboarding a consultant to help revamp our outreach and education program and deployment of quick-build and capital projects. Unfortunately, we have also seen a continuing trend of loss of life on our streets with 60 individuals taken too soon on San José's streets last year and this year possibly trending at the same tragic rate. It is appropriate that after two years that included a global pandemic, we take a pause to evaluate our ongoing efforts to see what is working, what is not and how we can improve.

DISCUSSION

Vision Zero Task Force

As Chair of the Vision Zero Task Force, along with my colleague Vice Chair Pam Foley, we have been able to facilitate six interagency meetings since late 2020 working on data sharing, outreach and education, and understanding better the root causes of this public safety crisis. As County staff hopefully begin to shuffle back to their respective departments from pandemic response and recovery, we hope to see opportunities open up even more around data sharing, as well as collaboration on their proposed Active Transportation plan. The same goes with VTA who are exploring additional safety enhancements in their public Right of Ways. The meetings have proven invaluable and we hope that our council colleagues will continue to support the convening of this Task Force.

Enforcement as a Tool

One of the Task Force discussions was around the efficacy of enforcement and behavioral change. As our DOT and consultant develop a focused and effective outreach and education strategy, we should also ensure that our TEU numbers do not dwindle to the barebone status that it was two years ago. We have grown the unit from six officers to now a budgetary allocation of 12 officers; albeit against a city of 1.2 million and over 200 square miles. Even with this increase of positions, we are significantly understaffed per capita. In this crisis, we must use every tool in the toolbox, including traffic enforcement.

Furthermore, AB 43 extends the period that a speed limit justified by a traffic and engineering survey conducted more than seven years ago remains valid, for purposes of speed enforcement, if evaluated by a registered engineer, as specified, to 14 years. This allows the city to enforce existing speed limits rather than open the possibility of having to update, and consequently, increase speed limits.

Project Evaluation, Management & Data Analysis

We continue to commend City Staff on expediently rolling out the many quick-build projects throughout our PSCs. It is not lost upon me that it does take time to understand whether a project is effective or not, however, data analysis is key for the city to remain nimble and adjust its projects more expediently. With substantial fiscal investment in the infrastructure that is deployed, we should have the capacity to quickly determine if a project is effective and make changes if feasible. DOT recently has allocated some staffing to project evaluation, though short term, and if we are to have a robust evaluation program - consistent staffing and data collection capacity is needed. This should also apply to managing the increasing number of recommendations produced through the various initiatives such as the Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) Walk Audits as well as fatality and city collision review.

Long Term Planning

It is no secret that we as a city have taken great strides in shifting our streets from being automobile centric to more multimodal, *complete* streets - as reflected in our current general plan goal to reduce automobile commute mode share by 40% by 2040. Aside from supporting our city's climate goals of cutting down Greenhouse Gas emissions and aligning with the 2016 Paris Agreement, reducing automobile use increases street safety. However, there is always room for improvement, and while our General Plan prescribes specifically the streets designed for automobiles, the high numbers of KSIs should give us pause on whether we should rethink and repurpose some of the high volume of traffic lanes on some of our general plan streets. We have seen it work effectively on some of our streets in Downtown, and we should boldly expand citywide.

CONCLUSION

I would like to wholeheartedly thank our DOT staff, all members of the Vision Zero Task Force and our community at large for all their work and collaboration thus far in bringing us closer to our vision of zero fatalities on San Jose's streets. In closing, I somberly end this memo the same way that we have started every single Vision Zero Task Force meeting, remembering the community members who have unjustly lost their lives on our streets these past several years. They are more than a statistic, and their memory serves as a reminder that we must continue to do all we can to make our streets safer for all and prevent future tragedies.