



Transportation Commission

TRANSMITTAL

January 9, 2020

RE: Safe Systems Approach and Strategies to Move Bellevue Towards Vision Zero

Honorable Mayor Lynne Robinson, Deputy Mayor Jared Nieuwenhuis, and City Councilmembers:

The Transportation Commission is pleased to submit to the City Council a recommendation on a Safe Systems approach and strategies to move Bellevue towards Vision Zero. Our recommendation responds to Council direction expressed in Resolution 9035 to “strive to achieve zero traffic deaths and serious injuries on Bellevue streets by 2030 ...”

Council Direction

On December 12, 2016, the City Council adopted Ordinance 6334, incorporating Vision Zero policies into the Bellevue Comprehensive Plan and directing staff to: (i) prepare and implement a Vision Zero Action Plan; (ii) update Vision Zero strategies periodically; and, (iii) provide Vision Zero status reports that aggregate and analyze data, document efforts, communicate progress to the City Council and to the community. Comprehensive Plan Policy TR-61.2 provides direction to: “Develop a programmatic approach to Vision Zero that integrates components of Education, Encouragement, Enforcement, Engineering, Equity, and Evaluation.” Consistent with this directive, the Transportation Commission listened to the community and worked with staff during five study sessions to arrive at our Safe Systems approach and strategies recommendation (January 10, March 28, November 14, December 12, 2019, and January 9, 2020).

Transportation Commission Recommendation

At our January 9, 2020 meeting, Transportation Commission members voted unanimously to recommend City Council approve a Safe Systems approach and strategies to move Bellevue towards Vision Zero (see Attachment). The Safe Systems approach rests on four pillars (Safe Speeds, Safe People, Safe Vehicles, and Safe Streets) paired with four supportive elements (Data, Leadership, Partnerships, and Culture). Nested within the Safe Systems approach are 36 strategies that build upon the City Council’s Vision Zero goal by articulating the programmatic steps staff should pursue to eliminate traffic fatalities and serious injuries in Bellevue by 2030.

The Safe Systems approach broadens the effort to achieve Vision Zero to include everyone – acknowledging that new vehicle technologies, improved street infrastructure, lower vehicle speeds, and enhanced public awareness on traffic safety each contribute to reducing the frequency and severity of crashes. The responsibility for the Safe Systems approach is shared: leaders make challenging decisions when traffic safety is at stake; staff leverages new technologies, closely monitors data to assess results, and creates partnerships with the public and private sectors; and all parties develop a safety culture that acknowledges zero as the only acceptable number of deaths and serious injuries on our streets.

Given the clear priority assigned by Council, and the iterative implementation process, as staff develops specific actions derived from these strategies, the Transportation Commission further recommends staff presents these actions to the Commission for review and feedback.

While Bellevue's historic traffic crash level compares favorably with the State and neighboring cities, the quantitative data analysis shows that in the past ten years, Bellevue's Killed or Seriously Injured (KSI) has remained more or less at the same level despite the City's aggressive efforts in reducing KSI. The Safe Systems approach is expected to facilitate a decrease in KSI for the Bellevue community as demonstrated in communities that have adopted this approach.

Data-Driven and Systematic Approach

Even though the road safety record in Bellevue compares favorably relative to other cities in Washington state the harsh reality is that every 19 days someone is killed or seriously injured on Bellevue streets. In 2018, there were 1,518 police reported crashes in Bellevue, resulting in 450 injuries. Of these 450 injuries, 19 were serious injuries and one was a fatality. Although we have not received final audited results from the WSDOT crash database we know that fatal and serious-injury crash data for Bellevue in 2019 will reflect an increase over prior years.

The Transportation Commission has carefully considered Bellevue crash data – including trends, contributing factors, and streets with a high occurrence of traffic crashes that result in severe injuries and deaths. Additionally, we've vetted existing road safety efforts already employed in Bellevue and Vision Zero best practices that include policies, strategies, and actions that are successful elsewhere and applicable to Bellevue. Finally, we've solicited input from residents and business stakeholders, first responders, public health professionals, safety advocates, technologists, and state and federal agencies. Notably, experts from the Federal Highway Administration, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Washington Traffic Safety Commission, Washington State Department of Transportation, Washington State Patrol, Pacific Northwest Transportation Consortium, Institute of Transportation Engineers, and others validated the Safe Systems approach and strategies at the Bellevue Vision Zero Summit on February 13, 2019 at Overlake Medical Center.

Next Steps

Pending City Council approval of the Safe Systems approach and strategies, we understand that staff will finalize the Vision Zero Action Plan and commence work on collaborations between city departments and with the community to advance coordinated actions. Concurrent with staff finalizing the Vision Zero approach, strategies, and action plan, the Transportation Commission requests Council direction to review the Comprehensive Plan to determine if any updates, revisions, or additional policies are warranted to support the Safe Systems approach. Finally, the Transportation Commission looks forward to periodically evaluating the Safe Systems approach, strategies, and Action Plan to monitor performance.

We appreciate the community's participation and City Council's leadership in the planning process in helping us formulate a programmatic approach to Vision Zero that will make our community safer.

Sincerely,



Lei Wu

Chair, Transportation Commission

Attachment: Safe Systems Approach and Strategies



Engage and educate people to take personal responsibility in Vision Zero by encouraging them to use the transportation system as intended and utilize all safety features in their mode of travel.

Safe People | Strategies

1. Launch citywide campaigns to build awareness around safety and Vision Zero.
2. Improve motorist training on safety and rules of the road.
3. Educate pedestrians, bicyclists, and scooter riders on safety and rules of the road.
4. Educate children and students on safety and rules of the road.
5. Foster and promote safety champions in the community.
6. Use data to inform coordinated actions across city departments to influence public commitment to Vision Zero.



Improve safety by significantly reducing the likelihood of crashes and minimizing the consequences of actual crashes.

Safe Streets | Strategies

1. Implement projects citywide that make it safer to walk, bike, and take transit (and where relevant to make it more comfortable and accessible).
2. Implement projects citywide to make it safer to drive.
3. Create public spaces that are safe and attractive for people walking and bicycling.
4. Establish clear priorities for curb usage.



Implement, educate about, and enforce speeds that reduce the risk of bodily harm for people inside and outside of vehicles.

Safe Speeds | Strategies

1. Design or redesign roads and intersections to manage speeds as appropriate for the intended use.
2. Assess and evaluate speed limits citywide and create a speed management program to address speeding concerns based on applicable data.
3. Educate people on the link between speed and safety, and, in the process, change drivers' risk perceptions of enforcement actions or causing a crash.
4. Create and promote neighborhood-based programs that aim to lower traffic speeds.
5. Use and expand automated speed enforcement (ASE).
6. Employ High Visibility Enforcement actions to increase compliance of safe speeds.



Implement and influence improvements to vehicle design and technology to reduce risk of injury to people inside and outside the vehicles.

Safe Vehicles | Strategies

1. Improve safety of private vehicles operated on our roads.
2. Improve safety of public vehicles on our roads.
3. Improve safety of shared mobility.
4. Leverage new technologies for safety data collection.
5. Create a safe environment for autonomous vehicle (AV) testing and implementation.
6. Implement safety enforcement technologies on public vehicles.



Commit all levels of the city to keep learning, refining our skills, and expanding our toolbox with the best available strategies, policies, and actions.

Leadership | Strategies

1. The Mayor, elected officials, and department leaders commit to collaborating to strive for zero traffic fatalities and serious injuries within a specific timeframe.
2. Employ meaningful and accessible community engagement toward Vision Zero with a focus on equity.
3. The Vision Zero Action Plan guides work and includes clear goals, measurable strategies, comprehensive data collection, timelines, and responsible stakeholders.
4. Decision-makers and system designers advance projects and policies that keep safety as a key priority.



Develop a shared language and understanding about traffic crashes, which begins by acknowledging that zero is the only acceptable number of deaths and serious injuries on our streets, that crashes are preventable incidents, and that we all have a role in achieving this goal.

Culture | Strategies

1. Encourage city staff to fully embrace the goal of striving for zero fatalities and serious injuries by 2030.
2. Prioritize safety improvements on roadways for all people in historically underserved communities.
3. Ensure enforcement, outreach, and education are equitable across the city's diverse populations.
4. Systematically reach out to the community to build a culture of safety.



Promote “One City” collaboration and partnerships between the City of Bellevue and the broader Vision Zero community to achieve optimal outcomes.

Partnerships | Strategies

1. Work with partner safety agencies to develop a more complete crash database.
2. Revise/standardize crash reporting data for consistent results across all modes.
3. Continually identify new transportation safety partners.



Collect and analyze data to understand the factors that impact the safety of our transportation system and leverage this insight to identify improvements and evaluate outcomes.

Data | Strategies

1. The performance and implementation of all safety actions are routinely evaluated, made public, and shared with decision-makers to inform priorities, budgets, and updates to the Vision Zero Action Plan.
2. Collect and analyze crash data to inform evidence-based strategies and interventions.
3. Apply a proactive, systems-based approach to identify and address top crash factors and mitigate potential crashes and crash severity.