



Transportation Commission

TRANSMITTAL

January 9, 2020

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

Honorable Mayor [REDACTED], Deputy Mayor [REDACTED], and City Councilmembers:

Council Direction

The Transportation Commission is advising staff as they develop the Bellevue Vision Zero Action Plan. In our advisory role, we are guided by Council intent expressed in Resolution 9035 "to achieve zero traffic deaths and serious injuries on Bellevue streets by 2030 ..."

More specifically, on December 12, 2016, the City Council adopted Ordinance 6334, incorporating Vision Zero policies into the Bellevue Comprehensive Plan and directed 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 worked with staff during X transportation commission meetings to arrive at our 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 ~~in favor of~~ recommending City Council ~~endorse~~ approve the proposed Safe Systems approach and strategies to move Bellevue towards Vision Zero (see Attachment). At its core, 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 everyone – acknowledging that focused city leadership culture, new vehicle technologies, improved street infrastructure, lower 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 making challenging decisions when traffic safety is at stake, staff leveraging new technologies and closely monitoring data to assess results, partnerships with the public and private sectors formed to achieve intended outcomes, and together we are developing a safety culture which acknowledges that zero is the only acceptable number of deaths and serious injuries on our streets.

While Bellevue's historic traffic collision level compares favorably with the State and neighboring cities, the quantitative data analysis shows that in the past ten years, Bellevue's 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 dramatic decrease in KSI for the Bellevue community as demonstrated in communities that have adopted this approach.

Methodologies

While taking advantage of successful implementation of the Safe System approach elsewhere, our recommendation is tailored toward the City of Bellevue.

The Safe Systems approach and corresponding strategies arise from carefully evaluating crash data – including trends, contributing factors, and streets with a high concentration of traffic collisions that result in severe injuries and deaths. These quantitative insights were blended with a consideration of existing road safety efforts already underway in Bellevue and Vision Zero program best practices which include policies, strategies, and actions that are successful elsewhere and applicable to Bellevue.

~~Finally~~Equally important, staff 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.

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Next Steps

Pending City Council endorsement approval of the Safe Systems approach and strategies, we understand that staff will finalize the Vision Zero Action Plan and commence work on implementing priority actions in this Action Plan. Those priority actions are “One City” collaborations between city departments to advance coordinated actions ~~in~~ engineering, education, encouragement, evaluation, equity, and enforcement with actively engaged community partners and fully leveraged resources.

{add brief language for the reason of developing policies incorporating the safe system approach into the Comprehensive Plan } Concurrent with staff finalizing the Vision Zero Action Plan, the Transportation Commission requests the opportunity to work with staff in developing recommended policies to integrate the Safe Systems approach ~~and strategies~~ into the Comprehensive Plan. We also request the opportunity to periodically evaluate the Safe Systems approach and strategies for performance measurement and improvement.

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