



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

File Number:
{{item.tracking_number}}

Agenda Item Number: {{item.number}}

Agenda Date: November 29, 2023

In Control: Transportation and Infrastructure Committee

DEPARTMENT: Transportation Department

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Catherine Hernandez

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: Citywide

SUBJECT:

Vision Zero Action Plan Update

SUMMARY:

Briefing on the Vision Zero Action Plan update and the High Injury Network (HIN) report.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

In 1997, the government of Sweden introduced “Vision Zero” as a street safety policy that strived to eliminate traffic fatalities across all modes of transportation (pedestrian, bike, car, and transit). Since 1997, many European countries, such as Switzerland, Germany, France, and Spain have implemented their own nationwide Vision Zero plans. Some nations that have adopted Vision Zero programs have seen significant fatality reductions within their transportation networks, with some countries seeing a fatality reduction of over 50% (Spain with a 53% reduction).

Stateside, Washington State released their “Target Zero” plan in 2000, U.S. cities didn’t add Vision

Zero as a policy within their transportation arsenal until the 2010s. Chicago would be the first U.S. city to commit to Vision Zero in 2010. They were soon followed by New York City and San Francisco in 2014. On September 10, 2014, U.S. Secretary of Transportation Anthony Foxx announced the Safer People, Safer Streets initiative. His goal was to challenge city planners & mayors, transportation engineers and transportation safety advocates to create solutions to make our streets safer for all modes of transportation. This would be headlined by his “Mayors’ Challenge for Safer People, Safer Streets”.

The City of San Antonio adopted Vision Zero San Antonio in 2015 becoming the first city in the State of Texas to adopt Vision Zero. The City was soon followed by its Texas neighbors Austin (2016) and Houston (2020).

Vision Zero is guided by six (6) core principles:

1. Traffic deaths are preventable and unacceptable.
2. Human life takes priority over mobility and other objectives of the road system. The street system should be safe for all users, for all modes of transportation, in all communities and for all people of all ages and abilities.
3. Human error is inevitable and unpredictable. The transportation system should be designed to anticipate error so that the consequence is not severe injury or death. Advancements in vehicle design and technology are a necessary component toward avoiding the safety impacts of human errors and poor behaviors.
4. People are inherently vulnerable, and speed is a fundamental predictor of crash survival. The transportation system should be designed for speeds that protect human life.
5. Safe human behaviors, education and enforcement are essential contributors to a safe system.
6. Policies at all levels of government need to align with making safety the highest priority for roadways.

To ensure that the City of San Antonio, implemented Vision Zero properly, city staff utilized the six-element approach: Education, Encouragement, Engineering, Enforcement, Evaluation, and Equity. Since the Vision Zero Action Plan’s adoption in 2016, the Transportation Department and Public Works (formerly known as Transportation & Capital Improvements) have continued to implement the six E’s. To aid in implementation, City Council has allocated \$1,000,000 per year to Vision Zero projects.

Education & Encouragement: Transportation has led the education and encouragement efforts with award-winning marketing and communications. Examples include a collaborative program with Municipal Courts teaching young adults about safe driving habits and a targeted campaign in high injury areas such as Culebra Road.

Engineering: Over fifteen safety improvement projects have been installed in high priority Severe Pedestrian Injury Areas (SPIAs) and Severe Bicyclist Injury Areas (SBIAs). Several more safety improvements such as signalized intersections and midblock crossings are planned between 2024 and 2027.

Enforcement: In partnership with the San Antonio Police Department there has been increased

enforcement in areas with disproportionately high deaths and severe injuries.

Evaluation: Throughout the past eight years, the department has evaluated the success of the Plan by conducting multiple studies and analyses (e.g., 2017 SPIA, 2019 annual report, 2020 SPIA & SBIA, and continuous updates to the Vision Zero Crash Map).

Equity: Using the Equity Atlas, Transportation evaluates and prioritizes pedestrian improvement projects based on neighborhoods disproportionately impacted by traffic fatalities.

For FY2024, the City of San Antonio's Transportation Department has embarked on updating the action plan for Vision Zero San Antonio. This action plan will align with Safe Streets for All (SS4A) goals, including:

- Leadership commitment to eventual goal of zero roadway fatalities & serious injuries
- Provide a timeline within ten (10) to fifteen (15) years of action plan update
- Committee oversight of action plan development, implementation, and monitoring
- Analysis of crash locations, types, and contributing factors
- Development of High-Injury Network
- Analysis of system & specific safety needs
- Integrate information received through engagements & collaborations into the action plan
- Analyze existing policies and identify opportunities for improvements.

As a part of the Vision Zero Action Plan update, Vision Zero will shift away from six (6) elements model and move towards the Safe Systems approach. The Safe Systems approach aligns closer with the original six (6) core Vision Zero principles and establishes five (5) elements that create a holistic approach with layers of protection, identified as safe road users, safe vehicles, safe speeds, safe roads, and post-crash care.

In November 2023, the Transportation Department finalized a contract to update the 2016 Vision Zero Action Plan and the SPIA and SBIA reports. Within the next three months, the SPIA and SBIA will be combined into one new High Injury Network (HIN) report. The HIN report will be developed to identify priority corridors where high severity collisions with motor vehicles, motorcycles, pedestrians, and bicyclists occur while also factoring in demographics and collision factors. The new report will play a crucial role in updating key strategies within the Vision Zero Action Plan. Both the HIN report and the Vision Zero Action Plan Update are scheduled to be completed by Summer 2024. The Transportation Department will provide updates during key milestones of the project and provide a briefing on the final report upon completion.

ISSUE:

This briefing is for informational purposes only.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This briefing is for informational purposes only.

ALTERNATIVES:

This briefing is for informational purposes only.

RECOMMENDATION:

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