

# SEATTLE'S SAFEST DRIVER 2.0 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



**City of Seattle**



**CAMBRIDGE  
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SAFER STREETS FOR SEATTLE

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# VISION ZERO AND SAFEST DRIVER QUESTIONS

## WHAT IS SEATTLE'S SAFEST DRIVER COMPETITION?

Seattle's Safest Driver is an app-based safe driving competition that initially occurred from November 2017 to January 2018. Aimed at positively influencing driver behavior, it is a project of the City of [Seattle's Vision Zero](#) initiative to end traffic deaths and serious injuries on city streets by 2030. The initial 2017/2018 competition resulted in positive behavior change. Seattle's Safest Driver 2.0 is a follow-up effort to continue to promote and prompt positive behavior change on Seattle's streets.

With [Seattle's Safest Driver 2.0](#), we're back with an even bigger grand prize (\$5,000 thanks to an ongoing partnership with PEMCO Insurance), plus bi-weekly prizes from a variety of partners.

Up for a little friendly competition? In it for the bragging rights? You can have both, and contribute to a safer city. Just download the app at [www.seattle.gov/safestdriver](http://www.seattle.gov/safestdriver) or directly from the Apple App Store or Google Play and enter your email address and zip code. Then, go about your daily travel. The app automatically tracks your trips. Users can log trips as drivers, passengers, or while on a bicycle, train, or bus. Check out your scores at the end of a trip, follow the tips to improve, and see where you rank amongst other competitors.

If you participated in the 2017/2018 Seattle's Safest Driver competition and still have that version of the app, you will need to download the newest version to be eligible for prizes. Once you download the newest version, you can sign in as a returning user (using the same email as last time), or start fresh (you'll have to use a different email address). Your scores from 2017/2018 will not count toward the 2019 competition.

Seattle's Safest Driver 2.0 runs May 13, 2019 – July 7, 2019. The effort is a partnership between the City of Seattle, [PEMCO Insurance](#), and [Cambridge Mobile Telematics \(CMT\)](#). It is a part of Seattle's Vision Zero efforts to end traffic deaths and serious injuries on city streets by 2030.

## WHAT PRIZES CAN I WIN?

The highest-scoring drivers are competing for a total of \$11,000 in prizes. Seattle's Safest Driver is awarding bi-weekly prizes (four times throughout the competition, with four prize categories), and finally as a tiered grand-prize for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd places. The grand prizes are provided by PEMCO Insurance. Bi-weekly and other incentive prizes are provided from a variety of partners, including Lime, Uber, Lyft, car2go, Zipcar, Seattle Science Center, and Rachel's Ginger Beer. To be eligible for any prize, a portion of trips must occur within Seattle city limits (this is, after all, a competition to find out who Seattle's safest driver is). To be eligible for the grand prize, you'll need to download the app within the first 4 weeks of the competition (May 13 – June 9). Read the full [terms and conditions](#) for more details.

- Biweekly prizes:
  - o \$50 value in code/gift card for:
    - Best Driver (2, \$50 prizes every other week)
    - Least Distracted Driver (2, \$50 prizes every other week)
    - Most Transit Trips (2, \$50 prizes every other week)
    - Most Bike Trips (2, \$50 prizes every other week)
- Grand prizes:
  - o Seattle's Safest Driver: \$5,000
  - Runner Up: \$2,500
  - 3rd place: \$1,000

## HOW DOES THIS RELATE TO VISION ZERO?

Safe travel behavior is key to helping Seattle reach its [Vision Zero](#) goal of ending traffic deaths and serious injuries on city streets by the year 2030. We can achieve this vision if we slow down and look out for each other. Seattle's Safest Driver tracks different behaviors — like speeding and how much you use your phone — and then ranks users against one another, rewarding safe driving practices. The purpose of Seattle's Safest Driver competition is to:

- Improve driver behavior through an educational, informative, and friendly competition
- Increase awareness of Seattle's Vision Zero efforts

## WHY ARE YOU MAKING A GAME OUT OF SAFETY?

Traffic safety certainly isn't a game, and Seattle's Safest Driver is about more than winning: it's about behavior change. Data shows that attentive drivers can help save lives. The competition is an engaging way to encourage drivers to use more caution and make Seattle's streets safer for everyone.

Our goal is aligned with Seattle's Vision Zero efforts to end traffic deaths and serious injuries on city streets by 2030 by improving driver behavior through an educational, informative, and friendly competition. Participants can win prizes based on their ability to drive safely and for improvement. Every time they complete a trip and see their score, they receive tips on how to improve and be a safer driver.

We modeled our initial effort after a similar competition in [Boston](#), which saw substantial behavior change during their 2-month competition that engaged close to 5,000 residents. The top 25% of app users saw a 35% reduction in speeding and a 47% reduction in phone use. By the way, Boston just kicked off their second contest, and we're planning on comparing results at the end of each of our efforts to see which city has the safest drivers!

## WHY IS THE CITY ENCOURAGING PEOPLE TO DRIVE?

We're not encouraging people to drive. We are encouraging people to drive safely, because we know there are a handful of key behaviors that contribute to most crashes (like speeding and distraction), and we want to work to prevent those. Seattle's Safest Driver is one way to encourage safer driving behavior, which makes streets safer for everyone. Through the app, we can also reward people for taking transit and bike trips. Win-win-win!

## WHY ARE YOU PARTNERING WITH PEMCO INSURANCE?

PEMCO Insurance is a local, community-focused insurance company that anticipates people's changing needs and supports the communities where its customers and employees live, learn, work and play. The decision to partner on Seattle's Safest Driver competition is a natural extension of PEMCO's dedication to supporting and encouraging safe driving behaviors for its customers and the community. Seattle's Safest Driver is grateful to PEMCO for underwriting the competition's grand prizes and supporting Seattle's Vision Zero initiative.

## SO, MY TAX DOLLARS ARE PAYING FOR THESE PRIZES?

No, the grand prizes for this competition are funded through our partner, PEMCO Insurance. The bi-weekly prizes are funded by a number of other partners, including Lime, Uber, Lyft, car2go, Zipcar, Seattle Science Center, and Rachel's Ginger Beer.

## WILL YOU HAVE PERSONAL INFO ABOUT MY DRIVING HABITS IF I DOWNLOAD THE APP?

The City values participants' privacy. While the competition needs some data in order to give feedback on driving behavior and award prizes, we also ensure that the City does not learn specific information about each driver.

The City doesn't collect data directly. We've partnered with Cambridge Mobile Telematics (CMT) to develop the app, based on their work with the [City of Boston](#). To provide drivers with feedback on their behaviors and award prizes to the winners, CMT collects email addresses, zip codes, phone sensor data, location data, and badges earned. CMT collects driver scores and data at the individual level, then they anonymize data within 60 days after the competition ends so that it cannot be used for any other purpose, and finally they provide the City with summarized reports at the zip code level.

The email you supply will be used in conjunction with your score, to identify and notify winners. The City receives email addresses for purposes of communication about this competition and we share winners' email addresses with our partner PEMCO Insurance for the sole purpose of communicating with grand prize winners. SDOT will be distributing bi-weekly prizes.

You are providing your information to the City of Seattle, Cambridge Mobile Telematics (CMT), and PEMCO Mutual Insurance Company (PEMCO). The information you provide will only be used in accordance with the City of Seattle's [privacy policy](#).

Please note that the City of Seattle is subject to the [Washington Public Records Act, Chapter 42.56 RCW](#). By participating in Seattle's Safest Driver, any records you submit to the City of Seattle may be subject to disclosure pursuant to the Public Records Act.

## WILL THE CITY USE DATA COLLECTED FROM THIS APP TO SET UP SPEED TRAPS AND SIMILAR TRAFFIC STOPS?

No, we won't use this data to set up speed traps. Our goal with this project is to help people driving on city streets to be safer drivers, so we can move closer to our Vision Zero goal. We already collect speed and crash data. This effort can complement our data, but won't drive our enforcement coordination with the Seattle Police Department.

## HOW EXACTLY DOES THE APP WORK?

Using GPS coordinates and math (machine learning and statistics), the app calculates 5 key measures:

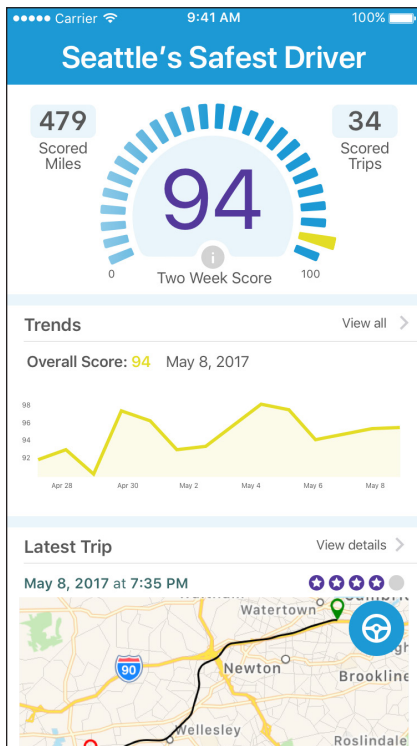
- Speed
- Acceleration
- Braking
- Cornering
- Phone distraction

After each drive, you get a score, feedback on how to improve, an opportunity to rack up achievement badges, and a chance to win cash prizes.

## I DOWNLOADED THE APP. WHAT DO I DO NEXT?

The Seattle's Safest Driver app runs in the background, and should automatically detect your trips. The scored trip appears in the app just a few minutes after you finish your trip. Download. Drive Better. Win.

Here are some of the features you'll see...



*Dashboard – where you'll see your overall score and a summary of your latest trip*

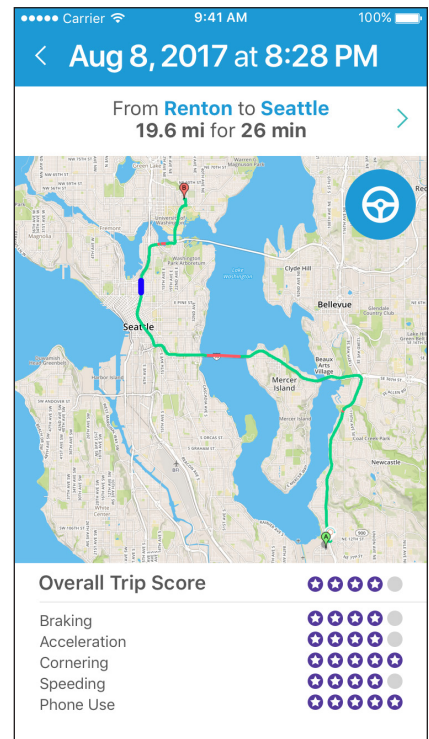
**Leaderboard**

Seattle  
You are ranked #4

Rank	Name	Score
1	b.mills	99.1 <25 mi
2	kelli.flowers	97.0 25+ mi
3	Randy123	96.6 150+ mi
<b>4</b>	<b>j.thomas123</b>	<b>94.3</b> 350+ mi
5	h.doyle	93.8 50+ mi
6	gerald.drake	93.5 50+ mi
7	wendy.nunez	90.1 400+ mi
8	benjamin2001	89.3 <25 mi

**4** j.thomas123 **94.3** 350+ mi

*Leaderboards – where you'll see where you rank.*



*Trip summary – to/from, how you scored in each category for that trip.*

## I TRIED TO DOWNLOAD THE APP, BUT I'M GETTING A MESSAGE THAT MY DEVICE IS NOT COMPATIBLE – WHAT'S THE DEAL?

If you're using an Android device, the most likely reason you're seeing this message is that your phone does not have a gyroscope, which is necessary for the app to work on your phone.

All iPhone models have the required hardware, however, some Android phones do not have a gyroscope. All flagship Android phones are fine, such as the Samsung Galaxy series, Google Pixel, LG G Series, etc.

# SCORING QUESTIONS

## DISTRACTED DRIVING

### What constitutes a phone distraction?

For phone use, Seattle's Safest Driver flags a combination of three factors:

- 1) The screen is on
- 2) The phone is being moved around
- 3) The car is in motion

The main thing we are trying to detect is when the driver's eyes and attention are both off the road – *not* things like using a smartphone in a mount for GPS directions, or making a hands-free call.

### I was stopped when I picked up my phone, but my score went down for “distracted driving”!

If you were stopped when you picked up your phone, but then you started accelerating before you put the phone back down, then that is a distracted driver event. It's against the law in Washington state to use your phone even if you're stopped at a light. Learn more about the distracted driving law at <http://wadrivetozero.com/distracted-driving/>.

With the Safest Driver app, the “distraction” penalty applies when:

- The screen is on
- The phone is being moved around
- The car is in motion

The app isn't specifically detecting phone calls; it's detecting when the phone is being used in a way that seems to be taking the driver's eyes and attention off the road. So, if you put the phone away or place it in a dashboard mount before you start driving, and don't pick it up to look at it or adjust anything during the drive, the app should not penalize you for phone distraction.

## HARD BRAKING / HARD ACCELERATING / HARD CORNERING

### I was trying (and succeeding) to save the life of a squirrel; and yet my good deed reduced my score for “hard braking.” Why?

Seattle's Safest Driver's app flags a 'hard braking' event when your phone registers a sudden drop in speed or slamming on the brakes in a lower-speed zone. That's still a danger sign at low speeds: If you have to slam on the brakes a lot, that's statistically linked to behaviors that are factors in automobile crashes.

Sometimes, hard braking is unavoidable. Rare hard braking could be due to reacting to things like a squirrel running into the street, or being cut off by someone who isn't paying attention, and isn't very much of a penalty in this competition. In contrast, frequent hard braking, which is associated with things like tailgating or not paying attention, ends up counting more against your overall score. The driver's star rating doesn't reflect that difference between rare and frequent hard braking; it's just intended to give you a measure of what happened on that particular drive. But, the overall score is designed to reflect the rare/frequent difference, and only penalizes you if hard braking happens a lot.

## **What is “hard acceleration” and why did I get flagged for it when I was just merging on to the highway in my new sports car?**

Hard acceleration – or ‘flooring it’ – is the opposite of hard braking. If you’re doing it a lot, it suggests being an ‘aggressive driver,’ which is a factor in crashes. If it’s something that only happens on rare occasions, then it does not count against your score much at all.

In any case, try to accelerate gradually after a stop. You’re less likely to skid if the road is wet or icy and, at an intersection, you’re less likely to be hit by someone running a red light. That wouldn’t be your fault – but you wouldn’t want it to happen to you!

Cambridge Mobile Telematics’ (the app developer) data team is considering how to handle zippy manual cars, and may adjust that in the future. However, though your car might make it easy to get up to speed quickly, it’s often safer (and more fuel-efficient) to increase gradually. Again, that other driver running the red light will be less likely to hit you.

In some cases, like having to merge into fast-moving traffic, hard acceleration may be unavoidable. If the app repeatedly flags your driving just in one particular location, the app may be giving you a warning sign about that location. Consider avoiding that route, or take extra care there.

## **Why did you penalize me for hard acceleration? It said I was going 0 MPH!**

The 0 MPH is the speed at the beginning of the event. So, if you’re stopped at a red light and then floor the gas as soon as the light turns green, the app counts that as hard acceleration, starting at 0 MPH.

## **What is considered “hard cornering”?**

The Seattle’s Safest Driver app flags ‘hard cornering’ when the phone registers going around a corner fast enough to make the average person lean over somewhat in their seat. More importantly, if the pavement is wet or icy, it’s measuring about the maximum that average car tires can handle without slipping. Because conditions vary, training yourself to take corners cautiously helps keeps you safe.

## **SPEEDING**

### **What is the criteria for speeding?**

The criteria for speeding is approximately 15 KMH over the speed limit. That’s like 9 MPH.

### **Why did you penalize me for speeding? I was going under the speed limit!**

If our speed limit database is incorrect, we can change it. Please contact [app-support@cmtelematics.com](mailto:app-support@cmtelematics.com) to let us know when you were driving on the road in question, and what the correct limit should be.

## **DETERMINING TRIP SESSIONS AND TYPES**

### **How does the app know that a trip is over? I had a short stop between two trips, walked around during the stop, and discovered the two trips were recorded as one trip.**

Seattle’s Safest Driver uses a number of different sensor inputs to try to figure out if something was one trip or two trips. We don’t want to break your trip up if you’re stopped at a really long stop light, or in rush hour traffic!

## **How does the app know when I'm a passenger in a car and not driving? Or when I'm riding on a bus? I don't want my score to be negatively affected by someone else's bad driving.**

At first, the Seattle's Safest Driver app assumes that you are always the driver if it detects that you are driving in a car. But if you are a passenger, just tap on the "driver" icon in the trip list and change it to "passenger." Then it won't count against your score, and trains the app to identify the drives for which you are the driver. The app also tries to detect if you are on a bus, but if it's mistaken, just change the icon to "bus" and, again, it won't count against your score.

## **If I switch drivers halfway through a trip, or move from driving to public transportation for part of the trip, how do I make sure only my trip as a driver is recorded?**

A quick way to break up a trip (if you're changing from driving to passenger or vice versa, or switching from car to train or bus) is to go into the Settings page and turn "Standby Mode" on and then off again. Standby Mode tells the app to not record any trips, so turning it on will cause a trip currently being recorded to immediately stop. Then once you turn it back on, it will be ready to record a new trip.

## **Recently, a lot of my trips were missing. What could cause that?**

If you have Power Save Mode on, it will prevent the app from running in the background and only allow Seattle's Safest Driver to record trips when the app is explicitly running in the foreground. Power Save Mode can be turned on or off under the Settings app; we need it to be "Off" in order to record in the background. Turning location services off will also prevent the app from collecting data.

## **Why are my miles reset back to 0? Why has my score decreased/increased when I didn't drive?**

The score and the mileage on the leaderboard includes the past two weeks. New trips add to your mileage, while old trips fall off after two weeks. Your score is based on a rolling window of the last two weeks.

## **If I download the app after the start of the competition, how does that affect my score?**

You can still participate: Winners are announced biweekly, based on a cumulative average of that time period's scores. However, joining after the start date may hurt your chances of a grand prize. Download and sign up early! The competition starts on May 13, 2019, and ends on July 7, 2019. To be eligible for the grand prize, you need to download the app by June 9, 2019.

## **My motorcycle trips are not being recorded correctly. The trips are recorded and scored if as a car, but when I change the vehicle to "bike," the scoring is removed completely. Why?**

Unfortunately, the app really isn't tuned for motorcycle safety (other than speeding). If you relabel the trip as a "motorcycle," it will not count against your score, and that will help us gather data on what the average acceleration profile for a motorcycle should look like. If you want to have your trips scored using a car's acceleration profile, you can label the trips as "car," but note that motorcycles have very different acceleration / braking / cornering abilities than cars do.

## **One of my trips recorded a location that was incorrect. Why does it show that I was at a location when I was not?**

Sometimes, it takes a little while for the app to detect that you're driving, and it makes its best guess at where you started. The guess can be wrong, but that's ok because the location doesn't affect your score. You can just ignore it.



## **The beginning part of a trip that was recently recorded was in gray. Why is that?**

If part of the trip is in gray, then the app has “guessed” at your route, based on the last known location. So, the app will “infer” the initial part of a trip and show it in grey.

## **SCORES AND STARS**

### **What’s the difference between the stars and the scores?**

Your overall score is more important than the number of stars on any given drive. Stars are an indicator of incidents, so you can see what sorts of things happened on a trip. Meanwhile, the score calculates the overall amount of risk per mile, then compares you to the average driver population for each of the subscores (such as speeding), and then weights those together. So, one drive with a bit of speeding loses you some stars on that drive, but – if it’s a long drive and you didn’t speed for most of the trip – your speeding subscore, and your score in general, are not very affected.

The overall score calculates the number of “risky events” compared to the overall driving time; whether it’s lots of little trips or a few long trips doesn’t matter. And, since Seattle’s Safest Driver calculates scores on a rolling two-week basis, you have an opportunity to continuously improve from your last two weeks.

## **For the trips when I was not driving, I reclassified them as being a “Passenger.” However, my sub-scores did not change. Why?**

When you reclassify a drive, the app recalculates your current score, but not your past scores. Also, updates appear the following day. So, if you reclassify a drive today, your changed score will appear tomorrow as part of the “score history.”

## **Why are there different colored stars for trips?**

The app labels four and five star drives with a different color of stars than three/two/one star drives. This can help you quickly pick out the good drives.

## **Can I show my insurance company my score to get a better rate?**

No. Since the City will not collect or save specific participants’ statistics or scores at the individual level, the City cannot share that information with others, even if you request that we do so.

## **Can I obtain my teenager’s score (or other family member’s score) to see how safely they’re driving?**

Only if they show you, themselves. Since the City will not collect or save specific participants’ statistics or scores at the individual level, the City cannot share that information with others.

# TECHNICAL APP QUESTIONS

## CONNECTIVITY

### **Is an internet connection required to run the app?**

An internet connection is not required to record a drive, but it is necessary for scoring the drive.

### **I have just the mobile app, and not the tag. Does the app capture the data for a trip automatically?**

The app will capture the trips automatically (assuming that location / GPS / background services are on).

### **I had to stop the app because my phone was too slow. Will this affect trip recording? Are there other factors that can impact recording?**

Several things can impact recording or scoring:

- 1) Standby mode
- 2) Sensor problems (for example, the phone cannot get a GPS lock, or the accelerometer or gyroscope isn't working)
- 3) Memory issues (for example, the phone is running a lot of apps and doesn't give Seattle's Safest Driver's app many background resources)
- 4) Force-quitting right before going on a drive can prevent the trip from recording
- 5) Force-quitting right after a drive can delay a recorded trip from being scored

## POWER

### **If I shut my phone off, will the app still capture the trip data?**

No. Phone apps cannot run if the phone is powered off. (Just turning the screen off is fine.) If my phone battery is depleted, do I have to charge it back to a certain percentage before it will resume? And, is there a set percentage when Seattle's Safest Driver stops?

The phone should record when it is at least 10% charged or plugged in. If it drops below 10% and is plugged in after that, then it should be able to record immediately – it doesn't have to get back up to 10% first.

## LOCATION TRACKING

### **Does the app always track my location?**

If the app thinks you're on a trip, then it will track your location. The app needs to figure out where on the map you are so it knows the speed limit.

If the app doesn't think you're on a trip, then it only pays attention if the operating system tells it that your location has changed. Then, it tries to figure out if you're currently on a trip.

### **If I were to be in a vehicle collision, does this app record the position of the vehicles when the crash occurred?**

No, the app isn't designed to reconstruct crash scenes. The app records the position of your own phone, via GPS, so it can record where you are on the map (within the accuracy of the GPS) but it can't tell anything about other cars. And, if the phone is flung around in a crash, it can confuse the readings and make them not useful in figuring out what happened.

### **I want to see if a friend or family member really went where they say they did. Can I use the app's map feature to see where they drove?**

Only if they show you, themselves! Since the City will not collect or save specific participants' statistics or scores at the individual level, the City cannot share that information with others.

## **I recently moved, but the app is still showing my previous location as my hometown. How do I update this to reflect my new hometown?**

When you first register, it takes up to a week to figure out your hometown. If the app has the wrong hometown at first, just wait a few days and it should correct itself. If it doesn't correct itself, or you change hometowns, please contact [app-support@cmtelematics.com](mailto:app-support@cmtelematics.com).

## **FACTORS THAT STOP RECORDING**

### **What is “standby mode”?**

Standby mode tells the app, “Don't record any trips during this time period.” You might do that if you're travelling and all your trips are going to be via taxi, bus, or train; if your day job is as an ambulance driver and you don't want those trips recorded; or you're going to be a passenger in a friend's car. Another way to prevent the trip from counting towards your score is to mark it as “Passenger” or another non-driver category, but some people prefer not to record the trip at all and standby mode lets them do that.

## **Why didn't my trip record?**

If your trip was “Recording” and then vanished, then your phone may have failed to record GPS or data from the accelerometer/gyroscope sensors.

### **Rebooting it may help.**

The app can miss all or part of your trip, if you force-quit the app just before going on the trip. (On an iPhone, this is swiping it up from the list of apps running.) When you force-quit, it ends everything the app is doing, including background trip detection. The app's ability to start running again in the background depends on how quickly the phone's operating system allows it.

## **I will be traveling, without my car, for a few weeks. How can I disable the app?**

In the “Settings” section of the app, turn on “Standby mode” to disable the app from recording any drives.

# HISTORY

## **HAS ANYONE EVER DONE THIS BEFORE? IF SO, WERE THEY SUCCESSFUL?**

Yes, Seattle's competition is inspired by [Boston's Safest Driver](#) campaign. Nearly 5,000 people participated in the Boston competition. Dramatic reductions in phone use and speeding by competitors were recorded, with 1,100 competitors seeing their phone distraction drop by 47% and their speeding drop by almost 35%. The app recorded over 190,000 trips taken by participants who represented 99 communities in Metro Boston, as well as all of Boston's neighborhoods. Seattle and Boston are part of a [network of Vision Zero cities](#) across the country working to end traffic deaths and serious injuries.

As mentioned earlier, we saw [great results](#) as well in our initial competition in 2017/2018, which is why we're back for more in 2019.