Vision Zero update
Moving toward a healthy, equitable, sustainable Seattle
Moment of silence

Since City launched Vision Zero 6 years ago

• **155 people have been killed** in traffic crashes
• More than **1,000 serious injury crashes**

Together, we affirm our support for safe and racially equitable streets. We acknowledge our commitment to end serious injuries and fatalities on our streets.
Presentation overview, key takeaways

• Street design matters and can advance safety, racial equity, and climate action goals
• We are not getting closer to ending traffic deaths and serious injuries
• We can get there by using proven solutions and reducing reliance on strategies that aren’t advancing goals
In a “normal” year, we see:
• 12,000 crashes
• 20 traffic deaths
• 160 serious injury crashes

In 2020, we saw:
• 7,100 total crashes
• 25 traffic deaths (prelim data)
• 144 serious injury crashes
The importance of safe street design

Many of our streets were designed to prioritize the fast movement of vehicles.

- 50% of fatal and serious injury crashes occur on 11% of street network
- Multi-lane, high speed, high volume arterials
- Since we launched Vision Zero:
  - Aurora Ave: 21 deaths, 49 serious injuries
  - Rainier Ave S: 5 deaths, 60 serious injuries
  - MLK Jr Way S: 10 deaths, 35 serious injuries
  - Lake City Way: 5 deaths, 23 serious injuries

![People traveling on Rainier Ave S at Martin Luther King Jr Way S](image)
Contributing factors to crashes

Street design is a key factor that influences behavior

Year over year, consistent contributing factors (human behavior):

- Speed
- Impairment
- Distraction
- Failure to yield to pedestrian

Hit and run crashes are increasing. This makes it hard to determine what happened/led to a crash and whether the person who fled was impaired.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Hit &amp; Run</th>
<th>Total Fatalities</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Vision Zero principles

• Traffic deaths are preventable (they are not “accidents”)
• Success does not hinge on individual actions, but on designing a safe system of self-enforcing streets
• Account for human imperfection

In Seattle, our goal is to end traffic deaths and serious injuries on city streets by 2030.
Traditional approach to traffic safety
Where has this gotten us?
Closer to ending traffic deaths?

Overall traffic deaths increasing due to increasing rate of deaths of people walking, while trendline for fatalities involving people in vehicles is decreasing.
Closer to ending serious injuries?

Looking at data from one year alone can obscure the bigger picture.

Despite a reduction in 2020, on average, we see 160 serious injury crashes a year.
Protecting the most vulnerable travelers?

- People walking and biking (2018 – 2020): 7% of total crashes, but 66% of fatalities
- Average age of people walking who have died: 56 years old
- ~20% of people walking who have been killed also likely unhoused/experiencing homelessness
Closer to achieving racial equity?

Fatal collisions and race, 2015-2018

7% of Seattle population identifies as Black, but Black people make up 12% of those killed in collisions on city streets.
Highly disadvantaged communities are more affected

In the past 5 years, 31% of traffic deaths were in the 20% of Census Tracts that make up the most highly disadvantaged communities.

Traffic deaths: ●
Racial disparities in traffic enforcement fines and fees

2020 study commissioned by Seattle Office for Civil Rights:

• Analyzed 17 years of Seattle Municipal Court cases involving legal financial obligations (fines, fees, and other related costs imposed by court)
• 83% were traffic infractions
• In 2017, Black drivers in Seattle were issued 2.6 times more traffic infractions with legal financial obligations per capita than were White drivers

Sources:
Closer to achieving our climate goals?

To meet Seattle’s climate and safety goals, we must redesign our roads to encourage and support more transit, walking, biking, and slower speeds so we can reduce reliance on single occupancy vehicles.
Let’s do more of what works.
Slowing down to save lives

• 90+% of Seattle arterials are 25 MPH; all non-arterials are 20 MPH
• Partnering with WSDOT on state-owned arterials
• Lowering citywide speed limits, initial findings:
  • 20% decrease in injury crashes
  • 54% decrease top-end speeders
Why speed matters

How fast you travel affects how much you can see, how quickly you can stop, and how severe a crash will be if you get in one.

A difference of 5 miles per hour can mean the difference between life and death.
Giving pedestrians a head start

• 30% of signalized intersections now have pedestrian head starts
• Surpassed 2020 goal (installed 300+); 60 more in 2021
• Reduction in turning collisions with people walking
  • 50% reduction for all injuries
  • 35% reduction in serious/fatal collisions
Redesigning streets

• Complete streets approach
• Use street design to manage speeds, reduce collisions, improve crossings
• Enhanced safety for all travelers
• Provides opportunities to repurpose space for more efficient uses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Street</th>
<th>ADT Before</th>
<th>ADT Change</th>
<th>Injury Collisions</th>
<th>Aggressive Speeding (40+ MPH)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stone Way N</td>
<td>13,900</td>
<td>-6%</td>
<td>-33%</td>
<td>-75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S Columbian Way</td>
<td>12,300</td>
<td>+15%</td>
<td>-19%</td>
<td>-46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nickerson Street</td>
<td>18,500</td>
<td>-1%</td>
<td>-20%</td>
<td>-93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NE 125th Street</td>
<td>13,600</td>
<td>+11%</td>
<td>-8%</td>
<td>-69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N 130th Street</td>
<td>13,298</td>
<td>+0.5%</td>
<td>-75%</td>
<td>-87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellis Avenue S</td>
<td>9,855</td>
<td>-39%</td>
<td>-24%</td>
<td>-30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rainier Ave S (Phase 1)</td>
<td>21,600</td>
<td>-27%</td>
<td>-30%</td>
<td>-77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NE 65th St</td>
<td>14,390</td>
<td>+3%</td>
<td>-54%</td>
<td>-42%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Before and after data for street redesigns in Seattle (ADT = average daily traffic)
Redesigning streets: Rainier Ave S

• 2015: Phase 1, Columbia City and Hillman City
  • Injury collisions down 30%
  • Collisions with people walking and biking down 40%
  • Top-end speeding down ~75%

• 2020: Phase 2, Hillman City to Rainier Beach
  • Evaluation report early 2022

• Starting soon: Phase 3, Rainier Beach
Where would we like to go?
Examining the traditional approach to traffic safety

What have the consequences (intended and unintended) been?

Is this approach advancing Seattle’s safety and racial equity goals?

How effective is each E?
Vision Zero and enforcement

• Re-imagining community safety: evaluating our approach with a racial equity framework
• Racial Equity Toolkit: automated enforcement (red light, school safety cameras)
• Active coordination with SPD

Move toward *self-enforcing* street design
Grounding this work in racial equity

We are learning more about Disproportionate harm to Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) community members that has occurred by way of the traditional approach we’ve leaned on for traffic safety.

Thinking about safety more holistically
It’s not just about being protected from harm of traffic crashes.

And hoping to move toward
A new approach that can help us make progress on multiple city goals.
Partner highlight: East African Community Services

• New partnership focused on BIPOC youth engagement, youth-led traffic safety education campaign development, active transportation
• Collaboration between Vision Zero, Safe Routes to School, Transit + Mobility teams
• Began with bike giveaway and helmet distribution to 100 East African youth served by EACS (bikes donated by Superpedestrian)
Key challenges and opportunities

• Funding constraints

• Do more of what’s proven to work (less of what isn’t)

• It’s possible. Connection between safer streets, climate action, affordability, racial equity
Questions?

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www.seattle.gov/visionzero