



Memorandum

TO: TRANSPORTATION AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

FROM: John Ristow

SUBJECT: CITY ROADMAP: VISION ZERO TRAFFIC SAFETY STATUS REPORT

DATE: April 10, 2023

Approved

Date

4/21/23

RECOMMENDATION

Accept the Vision Zero Traffic Safety Status Report.

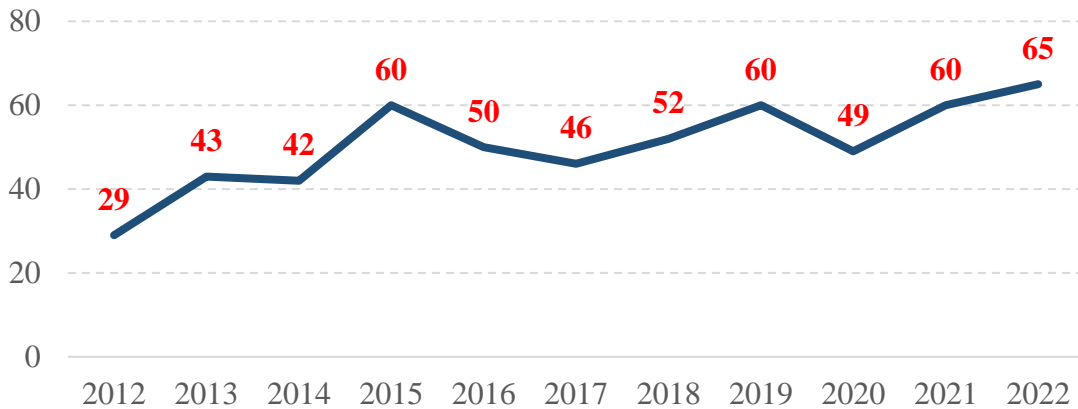
BACKGROUND

Vision Zero is a nationwide program adopted by cities and is the City's transportation initiative to reduce traffic fatalities and severe injuries. The FY 23-24 March Budget Message calls for increased Community Safety, including traffic safety. In February 2020, City Council approved a Vision Zero Action Plan and a \$25M investment strategy towards eliminating fatalities and reducing severe injuries while providing safe mobility on our roadways. A total of \$13M has been programmed to date, providing for a robust data analytic tool, safety redesign projects on high injury corridors, and outreach and community engagement to move towards a culture around roadway safety. This memo provides an update on traffic collision data trends year to date in 2022, update to the Priority Safety Corridors, and highlights of recent Vision Zero Action Plan accomplishments and upcoming work, including grant application efforts.

ANALYSIS

Traffic fatalities have persistently risen over the last decade in the US, prompting over 40 cities to adopt Vision Zero programs. In San José, traffic fatalities have doubled in the last 10 years, from 29 per year in 2012, to 60 in 2015, 2019, and 2021; and hit a record high with 65 fatalities in 2022. People walking continue to be the most vulnerable users on San José's roadways, and highest fatalities by mode. A record number of people (32) killed while walking was also recorded in 2022. The uptick in traffic fatalities in San José mirrors other cities across the US. Refer to Figure 1 for San Jose's 10-year trend.

Figure 1: San José Traffic Fatalities



A. 2022 Traffic Collision Data Trend

In 2022, fatalities (65, 2.2% of total injuries) hit a record high while severe injuries (189, 6.5% of total injuries) decreased, totaling 254 fatal and severe injuries. In comparison to 2021, traffic fatalities increased by 8% while severe injuries and all injuries decreased by 17% and 6%, respectively. Figures 2A, 2B, and 2C show cumulative injuries by month through 2022.

Figure 2A: Cumulative Injury Month

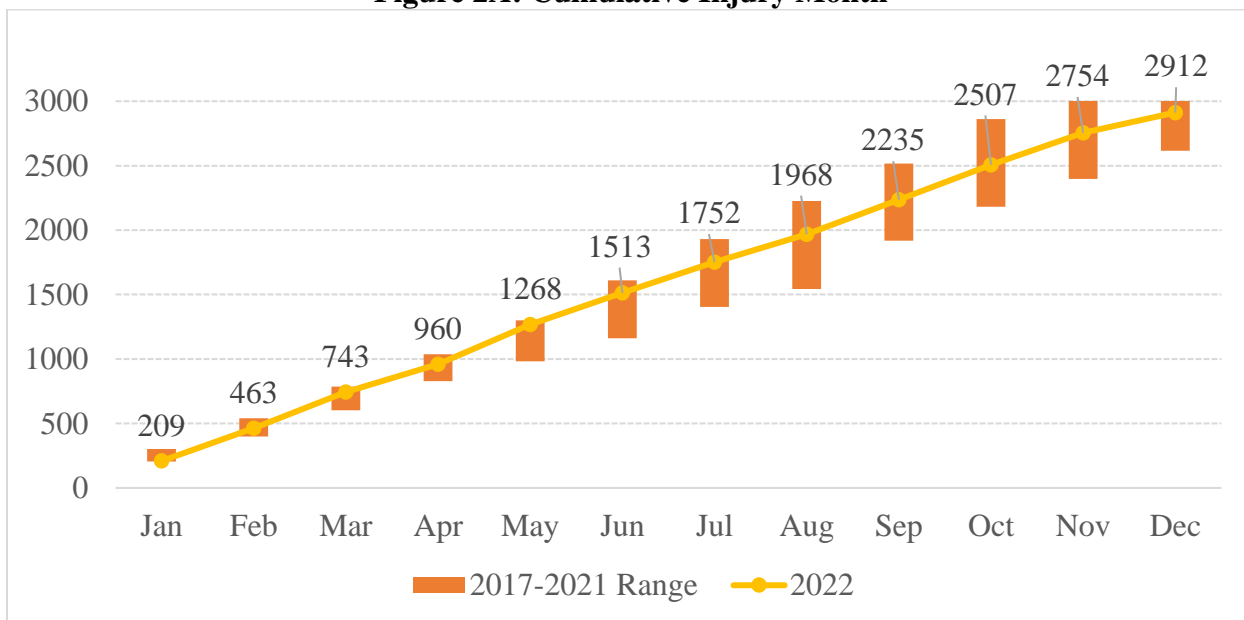


Figure 2B: Cumulative Fatal and Severe Injuries by Month

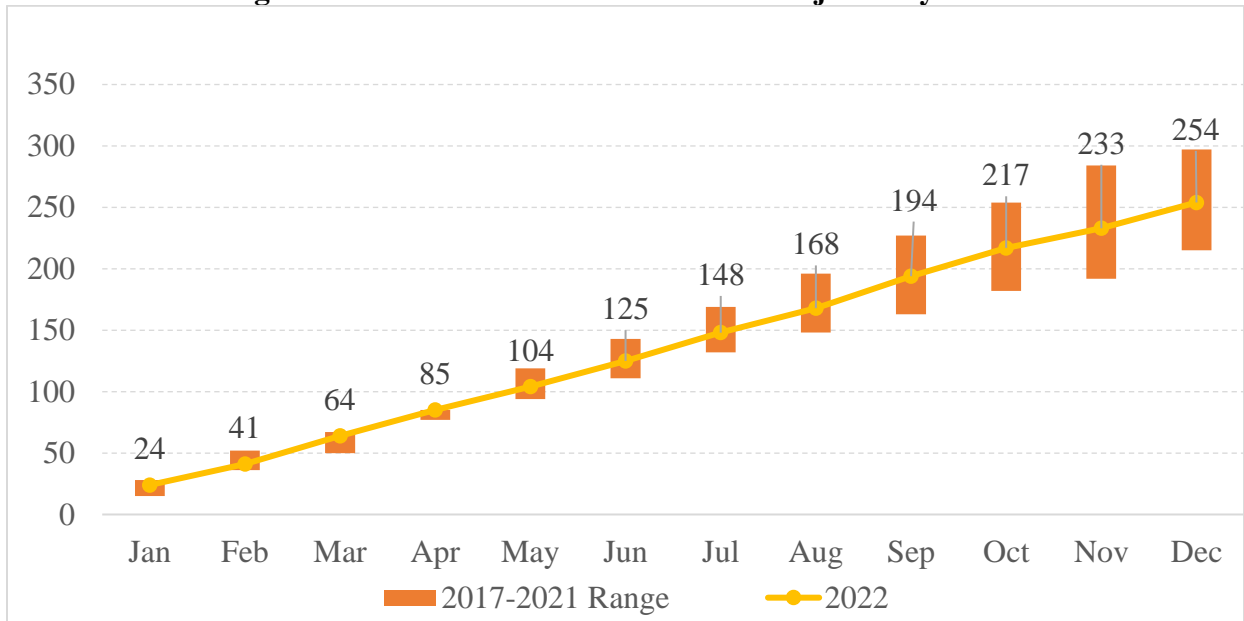


Figure 2C: Cumulative Fatalities by Month

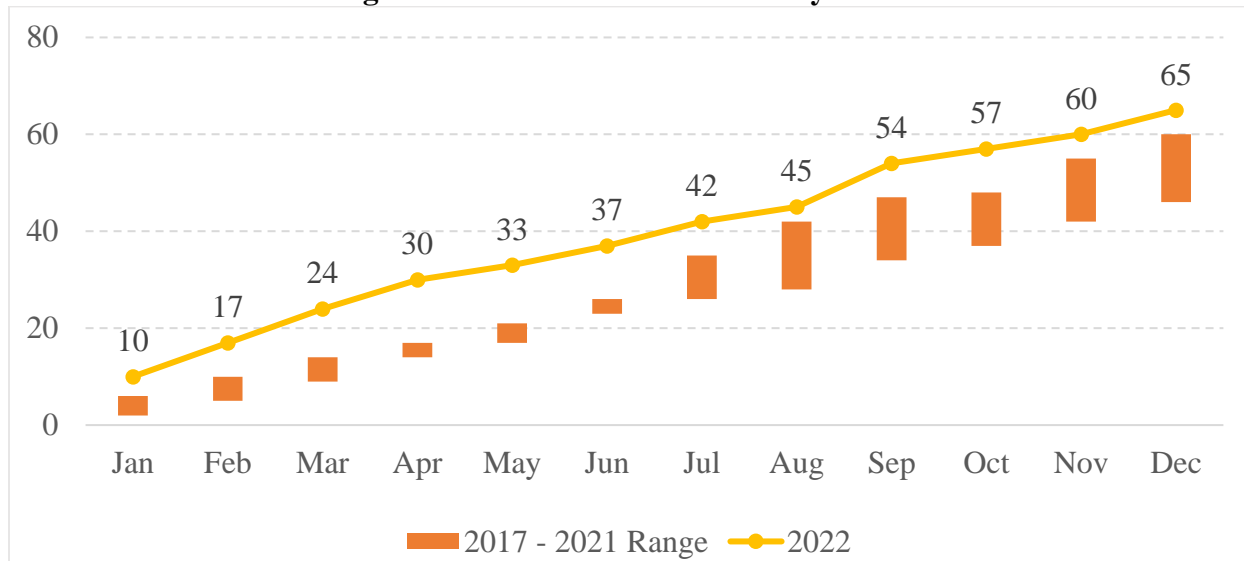


Table 1: San José Traffic Fatalities and Injuries (2018-2022)

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Fatalities	52	60	49	60	65
Severe Injuries	195	212	207	236	189
All Injuries	3,204	3,420	2,355	3,085	2,912

Historically, 30-40% of fatalities and severe injuries occurred along the Priority Safety Corridors. During the pandemic years of 2020 and 2021, a greater percentage of fatalities occurred on the existing Priority Safety Corridors with 47% in 2020 and 48% in 2021. While in 2022, traffic fatalities occurring on Priority Safety Corridors decreased to 32%.

High legal speeds and the rise in speeding increases the risk of a crash occurring and significantly increases the risk of severe injury or death across all modes of transportation. In 2022, 82% of traffic fatalities happened on roadways with posted speed limits of 35 mph or higher. More than 90% of the total mileage on San José's Priority Safety Corridors have a posted speed limit of 35 mph or higher. Speeding continues to be the top known violation contributing to fatal and severe injuries in San José and was a contributing factor in 28% of the City's traffic fatalities in 2022, similarly to 2021 (30%). The Vision Zero Action Plan focuses on strategies that lower travel speeds, such as lowering speed limits (AB43), redesigning roadways to slow turning and through traffic, and a speeding reduction behavior change messaging campaign launching in May 2023.

In 2022, several major roadways not designated as a Priority Safety Corridor saw an unusually high number of fatalities. Santa Teresa Boulevard which has a posted speed limit of 40 to 50 mph, had 6 fatalities (9% of the 2022 total). White Road, which has a posted speed limit of 35 to 40 mph, had 3 fatalities outside of the existing Priority Safety Corridor designated limits. Similarly, between 2020 and 2022, Curtner Avenue also saw an uptick in fatalities. These new trends point to the need to update the Priority Safety Corridors using newer data.

B. 2023 Priority Safety Corridor Update

Updates to the High Injury Network, which San Jose calls Priority Safety Corridors, is a best practice adopted by many Vision Zero cities. Priority Safety Corridors are the streets where most fatal and severe injuries cluster and have been prioritized for quick build safety redesign projects. The current High Injury Network of 17 Priority Safety Corridors was established in the Two-Year Action Plan in 2017, adopted by City Council in 2018¹, and was based on a 5-year crash and injury data from 2012-2016. For the 2023 update, a new methodology was applied to incorporate minor and moderate injuries, as suggested by the 2021 report, Recommendations for California Statewide Guidance on High Injury Network² (which San Jose contributed to). This methodology weighs fatal and severe injuries at three times the weight of minor and moderate injuries and a 5-year crash injury data from 2017 to 2021 served as the basis. The new 2023 Priority Safety Corridor network expands to 30 streets, 6% of roadways covering 46% of fatal and severe injuries. This increases the network to 150 centerline miles from the previous 70 centerline miles with 3% of the street covering 30-40% fatal and severe injuries. Most other Vision Zero cities in California have High Injury Networks that cover around 66% of their fatal and severe injuries. The increased coverage will allow DOT to prioritize safety on more

¹ http://sanjose.granicus.com/Viewer.php?meta_id=630650

² <https://scag.ca.gov/sites/main/files/file-attachments/cal-guidance-hin-090221.pdf?1633549750>

roadways with high counts of fatal and severe injuries, and to leverage more opportunities, such as pavement, development projects, and grant opportunities.

Of the 30 Priority Safety Corridors, 13 streets are new, 17 streets are from the 2017 Priority Safety Corridors, including 8 that were extended to include longer segments than before. 28 Priority Safety Corridors are within the City's jurisdiction, 2 are in the County's jurisdiction, and some segments are shared between other jurisdictions, such as unincorporated Santa Clara County, the Town of Los Gatos and the City of Santa Clara. Roadways with shared jurisdiction include Blossom Hill Road, Camden Avenue, McKee Road, Moorpark Avenue, and Stevens Creek Boulevard. 68% of the new 2023 Priority Safety Corridors are within San José's Equity Priority Areas defined by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission.

Existing Priority Safety Corridors were kept as part of the 2023 Priority Safety Corridor update. The Department of Transportation recommends keeping them in the Priority Safety Corridor network until pre- and post- project evaluations have been conducted to determine that there has been a significant reduction in fatal and severe injuries. Attachment A shows the 2023 Priority Safety Corridors in blue. Recently redesigned corridors shown in orange will be prioritized for pre- and post- project evaluations when enough post project data has accumulated to conduct the analyses.

C. Highlighted Accomplishments and Upcoming Work

This section highlights major accomplishments and upcoming work that support the key strategies in the Vision Zero Action Plan.

1. Projects along Priority Safety Corridor

In 2022, 82% of fatalities happened on major roadways with the posted speed limits of 35 mph or higher and driving over the speed limit was as a contributing factor 28% of total fatalities. Roadway redesign and safety improvement projects are heavily focused on slowing vehicular traffic by narrowing the travel lanes, creating a safer and comfortable walking and biking environment by enhancing crosswalks and bike lanes, and modifying traffic signals to enhance visibility and timing improvements for pedestrians. A total of 9.2 miles of quick-build improvements along segments of Branham Lane, Curtner Avenue, Hillsdale Avenue, and White Road was implemented this fiscal year. Although Curtner Avenue is not on the 2017 Priority Safety Corridor network, the Department of Transportation leveraged the pavement project and implemented quick build improvements as part of the pavement program to address recent fatal and severe injury crashes. We anticipate an additional 8 miles of quick-build improvements, , shown in Table 2, leveraging the pavement projects and two capital improvement projects (funded by the One Bay Area Grant) with corridor treatment will be installed this fiscal year.

Table 2: Upcoming Safety Enhancement Projects on Priority Safety Corridors

Type of Project	Streets	Length	Anticipated Construction Date
Quick Build	Saratoga Avenue between Lawrence Expressway and Williams Street	1.6 mi	Fall 2023
Quick Build	East Julian Street/McKee Road between 21 st Street and Toyon Avenue	3.4 mi	Spring 2024
Quick Build	Blossom Hill Road between Santa Teresa Boulevard and Blossom Avenue	1.1 mi	Fall 2023
Quick Build	Jackson Avenue between Berryessa Road and Alum Rock Avenue	2 mi	Summer 2024
Capital	McKee Road between US-101 and Toyon Avenue	2.8 mi	Spring 2023
Capital	Tully Road between Monterey Road and Swift Lane	3.2 mi	Summer 2023

2. Grant Applications

In FY 2022-2023, DOT received approximately \$74M million in earmark or grant funding for capital improvement safety projects that support walking, biking, and taking transit. This includes safety work on Priority Safety Corridors: Senter Road (State Earmark, \$10M), Story Road-Keyes Street (One Bay Area Grant, \$36.4M), White Road (One Bay Area Grant, \$3.4M), Jackson Avenue (One Bay Area Grant, \$3.3M), and Ocala Avenue (Highway Safety Improvement Project Grant, \$501K) and signal modifications at high crash locations (Highway Safety Improvement Project Grant, \$1.3M).

3. Public Outreach and Engagement Efforts

Public education and engagement are recognized by the Federal Highway Administration as strategies for improving traffic safety through changing behavior. As part of the 2020 Vision Zero Action Plan, one of the key strategies is to increase outreach and education. The following list includes upcoming outreach efforts:

- Vision Zero Strategic Communications and Outreach Plan: DOT hired a consultant in 2021 to design a community engagement strategy and messaging campaign to raise awareness in the community about safe streets. The consultant worked with city staff in collaboration with VTA and county staff to analyze the crash data, created focus groups to define campaign-specific objectives, identified campaign audiences and discuss possible causes, motivations, and barriers to behavior change. The resulting effort highlighted the need to focus on speeding reduction as a top priority.

The speeding reduction campaign will raise awareness about the danger on speeding above the posted speed limit and will be offered in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese. It will be launched in May 2023, lasting through July 2023, and will include new innovations in communications and social networking that can influence behavior change. Types of paid media include billboards, transit shelters, outdoor posters, broadcast radio and streaming audio, digital display, mobile interstitial, digital in-banner and pre-roll video, and paid social media ads. Web content will be compliant to Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0) and will adhere to the City's practice to ensure accessibility in heading styles, lists, data tables, links, and images.

- “Distracted Driving Awareness” Month Campaign: April is designated as “National Distracted Driving Awareness” month by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. DOT used data to identify corridors that have a concentration of injury crashes that were caused by distracted driving behavior. Changeable Message Signs were deployed on these corridors in April 2023.
- OTS grant for safety engagement in Spanish and Vietnamese: A consultant has been selected to do four engagement events working with community-based organizations.
- Outreach to people experiencing homelessness: The number of unhoused people who are dying in traffic fatalities has tripled since 2019. Vision Zero is coordinating with community organizations to set up 1 or 2 meetings to engage people experiencing homelessness in street safety.
- School safety plan: DOT sent out a survey to all schools, including public, private, and charter schools, in San José to solicit top traffic safety concerns. DOT will synthesize the information, develop a workplan with recommendations, define a budget and resource requirement as part of the Manager's Budget Addenda process.
- Adult crossing guard recruitment: Responding to the high numbers of vacancies after the pandemic, DOT and Vision Zero Task Force members have worked with SJPD and the Council Offices to distribute crossing guard job posting for schools in San José. A higher volume of applications has been received and are currently in the hiring process, including police backgrounds.

4. Vision Zero Task Force

The Vision Zero Task Force is chaired by Councilmember Pam Foley (D9) with Councilmember Bien Doan (D7) as Vice Chair. The Vision Zero Task Force meetings will occur twice a year and will be hybrid with both in-person settings at City Hall and online webinar. On March 1, all meetings subjected to the Brown Act will be required to return to in-person meetings. State legislature passed Assembly Bill 2449 which determined that teleconferenced public meetings would only remain an option while California was in an officially designated state of emergency. The state of emergency ended in California on February 28, 2023. Task Force members must

attend in-person (with strictly defined exceptions made for those who must teleconference which will also include disclosing the teleconferencing location and posting the agenda for any public members to attend) and a quorum (half the number of seats plus one) is required to hold the meeting.

5. Walk Safe San José Pedestrian Safety Plan

The Walk Safe San José Pedestrian Safety Plan is funded by the Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning grant, totaling an award amount of \$507,000, to develop a pedestrian plan for council districts with the highest fatal and severe injury crashes involving pedestrians.

Eight preliminary focus areas within Council Districts 3, 5, 6, and 7 that serve vulnerable populations have been chosen through mapping injuries, schools, senior housing, high transit ridership, and other strategic variables. Three main deliverables include inclusive an outreach plan, led by sub-applicant Cal Walks to refine the focus areas; quick-build street redesigns in the focus areas; and multi-stakeholder placemaking strategies to be used citywide. Consultant-led engagement events will run from April 2023 into early 2024, with anticipated completion of Spring 2024.

6. Legislative Updates

Department of Transportation works with Intergovernmental Relations and other cities to influence traffic safety legislation work that aligns with Vision Zero goals. In 2022, San José lowered speed limits in the Business Activity Districts as part of AB 43. DOT recently hired a consultant to evaluate for additional streets that meet the criteria. The consultant will also update or revalidate Engineering & Traffic Surveys (ET&S) which enable police officers to enforce speeds by radar guns. Additional legislation work includes:

- AB 1938 (Friedman, 2022) Update: The California MUTCD Update 7,³ released in March 2023, includes clarification updates that follow the passing of AB 43 (2021). San José staff worked with other California City Transportation Initiative (CACTI) cities to not require cities to round posted speed limits up.
- AB 645 (Friedman, 2023): Speed Safety Cameras Pilot Program: San José is co-sponsor on a bill to enable speed safety cameras.
- AB 251 (Ward, 2023): Vehicle Weight Safety Study: The bill proposes studying the nexus between vehicle weight and growth in pedestrian fatalities. Sales of heavier and taller vehicles like SUVs and pickup truck have greatly grown since 2000. A fee could be imposed.

³ <https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/safety-programs/documents/ca-mutcd/rev7/summary-of-changes-2014-camutcd-rev-7-a11y.pdf>

- AB 413 (Lee, 2023): Daylighting: This bill proposes requiring removing 20' of parking approaching intersections to improve visibility of people crossing the street. Pedestrian fatalities have increased at a nationwide level.

COORDINATION

This report has been coordinated with SJPD and the City Attorney's Office.

/s/

JOHN RISTOW

Director of Transportation

For questions, please contact Lam Cruz, Division Manager, Transportation Safety Division, at 408-794-1962.

Attachment A – 2023 Priority Safety Corridors

