



Memorandum

TO: TRANSPORTATION & ENVIRONMENT **FROM:** Councilmember Raul Perez
COMMITTEE

SUBJECT: Vision Zero Action Plan Update

DATE: November 1, 2019

Approved by:

Date: 11/1/19

RECOMMENDATION

Accept the update on the Vision Zero transportation safety initiative and the Action Plan and direct staff to

1. Include in the scope for the proposed Data Analytics Tool a component to study how Vision Zero will fare with future growth and include metrics such as socioeconomic impacts, especially in communities of concerns,
2. Conduct a procurement process for a third-party consultant to create a citywide outreach and engagement strategy that includes but is not limited to focused marketing campaigns, positive reinforcement methods, etc.,
3. Return at a future T&E committee meeting with a plan of action to fill the vacancies within the Traffic Enforcement Unit (TEU).

DISCUSSION

It is incredibly alarming that as of September this year, 37 people have died in traffic fatalities. The fact that traffic deaths and injuries have increased by 37% in the last 10 years while the city grew by 10% is a cause for great concern. While I appreciate existing efforts to address this crisis on our streets, we as a city and community need to do better.

Following the Data

I am not surprised to see that the primarily high killed or seriously injured (KSI) corridors reside in Council District 3, 5, 6, and 7. Yet, our budget process simply allocates each district the same amount of traffic calming funds (\$200,000 per district) despite the data that shows there are high KSI areas. As an elected representative, I try to direct those funds across my district as equitably as possible but I can say without a doubt that it is

not enough. I do not deny there are traffic-calming needs in all ten council districts, but there should be additional resources for the areas that are heavily combatting traffic safety problems, compared to citywide. Therefore, I support staff's recommendation to "identify opportunities within the Traffic Capital Improvement Funds to dedicate resources this fiscal year to the Top Priority actions in the Vision Zero Action Plan". Furthermore, this should be included in our future discussions surrounding equity.

Community Engagement and Outreach

The City is fortunate to have dedicated staff such as Cordell Bailey working tirelessly to educate citizens on traffic safety. It is wonderful to see his small but mighty team conduct community workshops, table at local events, distribute placards, signs, high-visibility vests and even bike helmets, all to equip our residents the tools to promote traffic safety. However, considering we live in a city of over a million residents, we need to creatively up our game to effectively extend our reach without exhausting our staff's bandwidth. For example, departments such as Environmental Services have robust marketing campaigns and outreach efforts to educate on issues related to recycling and illegal dumping. The Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) recently embarked on a creative education campaign to reduce pedestrian and train collisions after "rail operators are noticing an alarming increase in students and other pedestrians or bicyclists deliberately ignoring safety precautions in place at light rail crossings".¹

New innovations in communications and social networking can pave new avenues towards behavior modification. For example, at a recent community meeting in District 3's Northside Neighborhood, a resident shared that in other cities, digital messages of reinforcing good driving behavior have proven effective. This is why I believe we should at least study and subsequently create an engagement and education strategy that would effectively change driving behavior and dramatically enhance pedestrian safety.

Traffic Enforcement

I would like to thank SJPD Chief Eddie Garcia for recently allocating additional officers in our TEU. At the last Vision Zero update to this committee, there were only then 6 FTEs in TEU. Since then, that number has doubled to 12 FTEs. While this is promising, I hope to see this progress continue further.

In the past three fiscal years, there have been 48 adopted positions in our budget which is for 40 Officers, 7 Sergeants, and 1 Lieutenant. The most recent staffing allocation for TEU is 31 positions: 24 Officers, 6 Sergeants, and 1 Lieutenant due to recent assessments of organizational needs and as I understand it will be reflected in our next budget cycle. So there is indeed capacity to increase our TEU presence in our community, which is vital to changing the behavior of negligent drivers. I understand the ongoing personnel challenges that our police department continue to face and I am committed to working collaboratively with our SJPD to rebuild TEU so that we can prevent future incidents and ultimately save lives.

¹ <https://www.vta.org/blog/you-cant-beat-train-vta-kicks-safety-awareness-campaign>