From:	Robin Roemer
To:	District 6; District4; District3; District7; District9
Cc:	Espejo, Gina; Mintz-Roth, Jesse
Subject:	T&E Item d.1 Vision Zero Update
Date:	Saturday, May 1, 2021 9:53:23 AM

[External Email]

Dear Members of the Transporation & Environment Committee,

I would like to express my appreciation for the continuous progress the City has made in solidifying its Vision Zero program in the last year.

While it is yet too early to tell, if the reduction in fatalities in the last year is a sustained trend or a statistical adjustment to the mean, it is obvious from the report that the City's has made significant progress in widening and deepening its efforts.

While I appreciate the numerous safety infrastructure projects across the City, it has become clear that change on a city-wide scale will only be possible if we also continuously make smaller changes throughout all neighborhoods and on any project involving our roads.

So while there is much to highlight in the staff report, I would like to comment more extensively on the policy aspects of Vision Zero.

The report itself includes staff's work on Council Policy 5-6 "Traffic Calming for Residential Neighborhoods". I'm thankful that Council has prioritized this update.

> *In regard to policy 5-6, I would like to note though that it seems particularly strange that the City requires support from the community in order to implement traffic calming measures but the opposite measures that create traffic or safety hazards - removing calming measures, widening roads/intersections or even building new roads - have no such requirement?*

In addition to updating policy 5-6, I believe there are several other policies and policy initiatives that would help anchor Vision Zero in the daily work of all City staff be it in DOT, Planning or Public Works. Among those policies and initiatives are

- Update of **City Council Policy 2-2 Criteria for Installation of Traffic Signals** (last revised 1998). An update of the traffic signal policy more generally could also potentially include
  - A requirement that any signal re-timing includes pedestrian lead intervals citywide
  - Requirement to provide automatic "walk" phases instead of pedestrian beg buttons.
  - Implement of more "no right on red" in areas with high pedestrian activity.
- The **City's "Geometric Design Guidelines"** – although the guidelines are not available on the City's website anymore and have partly been replaced by the SJ Complete Streets Guidelines, numerous planning documents continue to refer to them and it seems that some DOT staff and DOT contractor continue to use them in their daily work. This is problematic as the guidelines in the past included guidance such as:
  - "Streets with high pedestrian volumes should be evaluated for physical enhancements such

as [...] removal of crosswalks"

- It also seems that **speed limits** are not always set at the lowest legally possible speed nor are exceptions granted under current state law applied to their full extent (e.g. 15mph in certain school zones, extending school zones as far as possible)
- The City could also demand a **more vigorous analysis of safety and active transportation aspects in the environmental review of projects**, e.g.
    - Currently, only vehicle-trip generation of a project is analyzed while generation of additional pedestrian trips (e.g. from ground retail) and their implications are not evaluated.
    - Transportation projects should rigorously be analyzed for their impact on induced demand and mode share.
    - There also seems to be limited efforts in ensuring safe and ADA compliant pedestrian and bike detours during construction work.
- The **City's General Pla**n as well planning documents such **VTA's VTP 2040** still include a number of road widening projects that should be reevaluated under safety (and climate) aspects. The VTP 2040 for example includes
    - Coleman Ave. Widening from I-880 to Taylor St.: Widen Coleman Ave. from four to six lanes as part of an enhanced highway gateway to serve planned expansion of Downtown San Jose.
    - Snell Ave. Widening from Branham Lane to Chynoweth Ave.: Widen Snell Ave. and add median landscaping to relieve congestion, improve safety, and enhance aesthetics
    - Zanker Rd. Widening : Widen Zanker Rd. from four to six lanes including in front of the the new Agnews school
    - Senter Road Widening from Umbarger to Lewis (suggested in the Measure B – Local streets project lists)
    - *NOTE: I'm uncertain to the exact status for these projects. There may have been changes since the VTP 2040 was adopted.*
- **City Council 8-1 Criteria for the Installation of Stop Signs** (last revised 2018)
- **Council Policy 5-1 Transportation Analysis Policy** (last revised 2018)

As a first next step I would recommend that,

Staff presents to the T&E committee/VZ task force a list of all City policies, guidelines, manuals, checklists and so forth that affect traffic safety and further prioritizes the need to update these documents with a Vision Zero lens.

I assume that there is a significant overlap with the work done on the SJ Mobility and Access Plan, so that only limited efforts would be necessary to compile and evaluate this list.

Lastly and since I serve VTA's citizen's advisory committee, I believe there is an important overlap between traffic safety and encouraging the use of transit. I'm aware that Councilmember Peralez has been very involved in safety aspects around light rail stations. I wanted to propose that staff could also look into **improving safety around bus stops**. One seemingly simple improvement could be to evaluate the **implementation of bus stop markings on city roads** (similar to: https://www.alamy.com/road-surface-markings-at-bus-stop-on-empty-city-street-in-black-and-white-high-contrast-image256868755.html) especially as part of the pavement program. Not only would this ensure better curb access for buses, it would also alert drivers to the potential presences of transit riders/pedestrians. Additionally, it would promote greater transit use by highlighting bus stop locations in the urban landscape.

Thank you for your consideration,

Robin Roemer