



INTEROFFICE MEMO

DATE: July 24, 2018

TO: Mayor and Members of the City Council

FROM: Mayor Mark Arapostathis and Councilmember Colin Parent

SUBJECT: Vision Zero to End Traffic Deaths in La Mesa

Cities across the country have recently adopted commitments to a concept of "Vision Zero," to eliminate traffic fatalities and serious injuries.

We would like this discussion item to be an initial conversation about whether to take further steps at later Council meetings for La Mesa to adopt its own Vision Zero commitment.

La Mesa has had a longstanding commitment to safe streets, including with our Traffic Commission, traffic calming program, and past Safe Routes to School efforts. Our staff and Council have also pursued important safety infrastructure efforts, including an Urban Trails plan, a Bicycle Plan, a Sidewalk Plan, and planning and funding for numerous safety-oriented road-improvement projects. A Vision Zero commitment would be a natural extension of our City's prioritization of safety.

The City of San Diego was the first city in the region to adopt a Vision Zero commitment, in 2015. As of today, no other city in the region has adopted such a commitment. Cities as diverse as New York City, Los Angeles, Fort Lauderdale, and Long Beach have adopted Vision Zero commitments and have successfully reduced deaths and injuries on their streets. To our knowledge, if La Mesa adopted a Vision Zero commitment, we would be the smallest city in the nation to do so. A national organization called the Vision Zero network maintains a list of current Vision Zero cities online at their website: <https://visionzeronetwork.org>.

Like our recently adopted Climate Action Plan, a Vision Zero commitment would memorialize the direction and priorities of the Council, and direct staff to pursue policies and funding opportunities to advance those priorities. Also, a Vision Zero commitment would have clear co-benefits with our Climate Action Plan, which itself requires that the City of La Mesa make walking and bicycling more safe and accessible, in order to reduce the need for additional car trips.

Vision Zero starts with the ethical belief that everyone has the right to move safely in their communities, and that system designers and policymakers share the responsibility to ensure safe systems for travel. Vision Zero recognizes that people will sometimes

make mistakes, so the road system and related policies should be designed to ensure those inevitable mistakes do not result in severe injuries or fatalities. This means that system designers and policymakers are expected to improve the roadway environment, design, policies, and other related systems to lessen both the frequency and the severity of crashes.

Some policy items that a Vision Zero commitment might support could include:

- More funding for crosswalks
- Prioritizing grant applications for road safety projects
- Using injury and crash data to prioritize where street improvements are made
- Applying for Safe Routes to School funding sources to educate parents and school children about safety
- Implementing an updated Complete Streets policy

Attached to this memo is a document from Circulate San Diego that was funded by the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency. It identifies where traffic injuries and deaths are concentrated in the City of La Mesa.

ZERO TRAFFIC DEATHS

VISION ZERO

IN SAN DIEGO BY 2025

City of La Mesa

Intersections with Highest Number of Bicycle and Pedestrian Crashes

Intersection	Collisions
Fletcher Parkway & Southern Road	7
La Mesa Boulevard & Spring Street	7
Parks Avenue & University Avenue	6
Massachusetts Avenue & University Avenue	5
El Cajon Boulevard & Jessie Avenue	4
La Mesa Boulevard & University Avenue	3
Center Drive & Grossmont Center Drive	3

Corridors with Highest Number of Bicycle and Pedestrian Crashes

Corridor	Total
University Avenue	25
El Cajon Boulevard	17
Lake Murray Boulevard	16
Baltimore Drive	15
Fletcher Parkway	14

Total Pedestrian and Bicycle Crashes and Deaths by Year, Compared with Homicides

Year	Total Bike/Ped Collisions	Total Bike/Ped Fatalities	Homicides
2006	24	1	3
2007	31	0	0
2008	37	1	0
2009	34	1	0
2010	32	0	0
2011	30	2	1
2012	37	0	2
2013	32	1	1
Total	257	6	6

*Data from years 2006 to 2013

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Towards Vision Zero: Policy Recommendations for La Mesa

1. Prioritize safety for Capital Improvement Plans

Capital Improvement Plans should prioritize infrastructure projects that promote safety where data shows the highest numbers of crashes for both corridors and intersections. CIP plans that do not already prioritize these projects should be reexamined to make safety a policy priority.

2. Adopt Complete Streets Policies and update street design guidelines

Cities should adopt complete streets policies to ensure that road improvements benefit safety for all users. These policies should be complemented with street design policies to improve safety for all. Cities can adopt policies, resolutions, manuals, and traffic calming approaches that institutionalize the provision of multi-modal street design. The National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) has numerous resources outlining model street designs.

3. Introduce traffic calming measures on arterials, where crashes are most likely to occur

Data in numerous Vision Zero cities across the U.S. show that crashes are more likely to occur on arterials than on neighborhood streets. Traffic calming should be deployed on the most dangerous corridors. Cities such as Chula Vista and San Diego have been successful in soliciting funds from the Highway State Improvement Program (HSIP) for these types of improvements.

4. Research data to determine most dangerous behaviors contributing to crashes

At the heart of Vision Zero is the coordination of safe street design, education, and enforcement activities to change dangerous behaviors and save lives. Jurisdictions should research the most common causes for crashes, and engage the local police department to implement education and enforcement to change dangerous behaviors. Cities such as San Diego and El Cajon have been successful in soliciting funds from the California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) to conduct these activities.

5. Assess potential for Safe Routes to School program, both infrastructure and education

Traffic crashes are the leading cause of unintentional death for children ages 5-14 in the San Diego region. If the dangerous corridors and intersections identified through Vision Zero are in close proximity to schools, cities should prioritize traffic calming projects in these areas to slow dangerous speeds, and consider organizing a Safe Routes to School educational program. Grants from OTS, Caltrans' Active Transportation Program, and SANDAG's Active Transportation Grant Program provide funding for these types of activities.