



CITY OF PROVIDENCE  
MAYOR BRETT P. SMILEY

**GREEN AND COMPLETE STREETS ADVISORY COUNCIL**

**Staff Report: Vision Zero Resolution feedback (For Action)**

*Presented at November 20, 2023 GCSC meeting*

**Project Background**

City Councilor Sue Anderbois has convened with members of the Administration to draft a Vision Zero Resolution and has asked for feedback from the Green and Complete Streets Advisory Council. The text of the draft resolution is largely based on a model resolution provided by the Vision Zero Network.

Draft language for the resolution is attached on subsequent pages.

---

Respectfully submitted by Alex Ellis.

**DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT**

JOSEPH A. DOORLEY JR. MUNICIPAL BUILDING, 444 WESTMINSTER ST, PROVIDENCE RI 02903  
PHONE 401.680.8400 | [WWW.PROVIDENCERI.GOV/PLANNING](http://WWW.PROVIDENCERI.GOV/PLANNING)

## Resolution establishing Providence as a Vision Zero City

**WHEREAS**, the life and health of all ~~persons~~ people living and traveling within the City of Providence ~~are~~ is our utmost priority, and no one should die or be seriously injured while traveling on our city streets; and

**Commented [AE1]:** Edits in red from 11/20/23 were made by City Council for the draft released to the working group of Council & Administration representatives on 11/19/23

**WHEREAS**, Vision Zero is the concept that traffic deaths and serious injuries on our roadways are unacceptable; and

**WHEREAS**, According to a comprehensive study conducted by the Providence Streets Coalition, between 2011 and 2021 there were 2,200 recorded instances of cars hitting pedestrians and 904 instances of cars hitting cyclists; and

**Commented [AE2]:** Blue text came from the original Council draft; black text came from the model resolution provided by the Vision Zero Network and edited for Providence context by Alex Ellis.

**WHEREAS**, Mitigating these accidents ~~by becoming a Vision Zero City~~ should be a top priority of Providence ~~as it seeks to meet benchmarks in public health and sustainability~~; and

**WHEREAS**, The Vision Zero Network was created to “eliminate traffic fatalities and severe injuries among all road users — while increasing safe, healthy, equitable mobility.” They envision a paradigm shift in recognizing the preventable nature of traffic deaths and crashes, including recognizing system changes to incorporate human failure and optimize safe alternate transportation; and

**WHEREAS**, speed is recognized as a major determining factor of survival in a crash;<sup>7</sup> and

**WHEREAS**, children, older adults, people of color, people with disabilities, people who are unhoused, and people with low income face a significantly disproportionate risk of traffic injuries and fatalities;<sup>9</sup> and

**WHEREAS**, The 2020 Great Streets Plan and Green and Complete Streets Advisory Council has already dedicated the City to the improvement of transportation through centering of *Great Streets*, which are defined as “safe for all people,” “clean, green and sustainable,” “inclusive for all,” and are “vibrant and prosperous.”; and

**WHEREAS**, The Great Streets Plan also commits to “lowering greenhouse gas emissions” and to “connect every neighborhood in the city with low-stress, high-comfort facilities for people of all ages and abilities to walk, run, bike, scoot, and skate along.”

**WHEREAS**, The Providence Climate Justice Plan includes targets to reduce vehicle miles traveled, increase public transit ridership, and increase sidewalk maintenance and investment in frontline communities and includes a strategy to “invest in infrastructure to make walking and riding bicycles safer and more accessible, especially in low-income areas; and

**Formatted:** Font: Not Bold

**WHEREAS**, The Act on Climate commits the state to carbon neutrality by 2050, with 45% below 1990 emissions levels by 2030 and 80% by 2040; and

**WHEREAS**, As the City invests in the mobility infrastructure such as sidewalks and streets, it is imperative to integrate safe and sustainable options for all residents to engage in multimodal ~~commuting~~ traveling, so there is a decrease in traffic crashes, traffic deaths, and greenhouse gas emissions, which strengthens the health and quality of life for all residents in Providence.

**WHEREAS**, successful Vision Zero programs are a result of both a complete government approach (i.e., interdepartmental, coordinated initiatives) and community support of Vision Zero objectives and action plans; and

**WHEREAS**, The City will need to ~~pass bold policy and~~ implement aggressive commonsense, simple programs and policy and take advantage of current transportation development projects, including the pursuit of outside funding to create safe and green transportation for all. The Council seeks to partner with the Mayor and ~~his~~ the Administration on these important initiatives.

~~**WHEREAS**, Vision Zero is a holistic strategy aimed at eliminating all traffic fatalities and severe injuries suffered by all road users while increasing safe, healthy, equitable mobility for all; and~~

~~**WHEREAS**, streets and transportation systems have traditionally been designed primarily to move cars efficiently, and Vision Zero supports a paradigm shift by designing streets and transportation systems to move all people safely, including people of all ages and abilities, pedestrians, bicyclists, public transit users, scooter riders, and motorecyclists, as well as drivers and passengers of motor vehicles; and~~

~~**WHEREAS**, Vision Zero recognizes that people will sometimes make mistakes, so the road system and related policies should be designed to ensure that those inevitable mistakes do not result in severe injuries or fatalities; therefore, transportation planners and engineers and policymakers are expected to improve the roadway environment, policies, and other related systems to lessen the severity of crashes; and~~

~~**WHEREAS**, [number] people in the City of Providence lost their lives to traffic deaths in [year/time period], and traffic crashes are among the leading cause of deaths in the United States;<sup>6</sup> and~~

~~**WHEREAS**, the City of Providence's transportation infrastructure serves an increasing number of vulnerable road users such as pedestrians and bicyclists; and~~

~~**WHEREAS**, according to the City of Providence Department of Public Safety, pedestrians and bicyclists are involved in [percentage] percent of collisions and account for [percentage] percent of traffic deaths in the City of Providence; and~~

~~WHEREAS, the injury rate for pedestrians involved in collisions is approximately [percentage] percent, and the injury rate for bicyclists involved in collisions is approximately [percentage] percent; and~~

~~WHEREAS, the City of Providence is working toward reducing vehicle speeds because the likelihood of a pedestrian surviving a crash is 10 percent if hit by a vehicle moving 40 mph;<sup>8</sup> and~~

~~WHEREAS, people of color are disproportionately affected by racial profiling and inequitable enforcement of traffic violations;<sup>10-12</sup> and~~

~~WHEREAS, making streets safer for all people using all modes of transportation will encourage people to travel on foot, by bicycle, and by public transit, which supports a healthier, more active lifestyle and reduces environmental pollution; and~~

~~WHEREAS, Vision Zero resolutions have been adopted by many jurisdictions across the United States; and~~

~~WHEREAS, the City of Providence has already adopted the Green and Complete Streets Ordinance that requires “all publicly owned transportation facilities” to be designed such that “users of all ages and abilities can travel safely and independently”;~~

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, ~~by that the City Council of the City of Providence, State of Rhode Island, as follows:~~**

~~1. The City of Providence adopts the goal of zero traffic deaths and serious injuries, stating that no loss of life or serious injury is acceptable on our streets.~~

Formatted: No bullets or numbering

~~The the City of Providence adopts the goal of eliminating all traffic deaths and serious injuries by 2030 and endorses Vision Zero as a comprehensive and holistic approach to achieving this goal.~~

Commented [AE3]: Typo in latest draft

~~2. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the City will incorporate this vision into the implementation of all relevant existing plans and policies, including Act on Climate, the Climate Justice Plan, the Great Streets Plan, and the Green and Complete Streets ordinance.~~

Formatted: No bullets or numbering

~~3. The City of Providence adopts the goal of eliminating racial profiling and inequitable~~

Formatted: No bullets or numbering

~~enforcement of traffic violations.~~

4. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED. The City of Providence adopts the Vision Zero policy attached hereto as Exhibit A and makes it part of this Resolution, effective immediately.

Formatted: No bullets or numbering

~~5. The City Clerk shall certify the adoption of this Resolution, effective immediately, by the City Council.~~

Formatted: No bullets or numbering

6. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED. Upon passage a copy of this Resolution shall be sent to the office of the Mayor, to the Director of the Department of Sustainability, to the Director of the Department of Public Works, ~~to the Director of Planning and Development, and to the Traffic Engineer,~~ to the Director of Planning and Development, to the Chair of the Green and Complete Streets Advisory Council, and to the Director of the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority.

Formatted: No bullets or numbering

~~PASSED AND ADOPTED~~ by the City Council of the City of Providence, State of Rhode Island, on [Date], 20[ ]; by the following vote: [ ]:

## Exhibit A

This Vision Zero Policy was adopted by Resolution No. [ ] by the City Council of the City of Providence on [Date], 2[ ].

### VISION ZERO POLICY OF THE CITY OF PROVIDENCE

#### A. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Vision Zero Policy (“Policy”) is to eliminate all traffic fatalities and traffic-related severe injuries by using data-driven policy changes and equity-focused community engagement of diverse and necessary stakeholders to design and implement a transportation system that provides safe, healthy, and equitable mobility for all. This Policy seeks to achieve this purpose by (1) establishing that Vision Zero is a priority goal for the City of Providence and (2) creating a Vision Zero task force of senior city officials (or their designees) that is responsible for gathering data and working with the community – including traditionally underrepresented groups – to develop an action plan for achieving the goals of Vision Zero through equity-focused strategies that establish safe speeds, create safe streets, and improve safety culture and collaboration.

#### B. DEFINITIONS

1. “Community Engagement” means the various methods of informing, consulting, collaborating with, involving, or empowering community members with respect to government decisions.
2. “Fatal Injury” is any injury that results in death within 30 days after the motor vehicle crash in which the injury occurred. If the person did not die at the scene but died within 30 days of the motor vehicle crash in which the injury occurred, the injury classification should be changed from the attribute previously assigned to the attribute “Fatal Injury.” means definition, perhaps one from an existing local or state traffic data collection policy or from, for example, Model Minimum Uniform Crash Criteria (5th ed., 2017) or KABCO Injury Classification Scale and Definitions.
3. “High-Injury Networks” means specific streets or roads (or portions thereof) and/or intersections within the boundaries of the City of Providence that have a high concentration of traffic fatalities and/or severe injuries, according to Traffic Safety Data.
4. “Historically Underinvested Areas” means census block groups where two of the following three criteria are present according to the most current data from the US

Census Bureau’s American Community Survey: (a) median income is less than [65%] the Area Median Income, (b) more than 25% of respondents identify as a race and ethnicity other than non-Hispanic White, or (c) more than 25% of respondents speak English less than “very well”.

5. “Priority Populations” means youth, older adults, communities of color, people with low income, people with disabilities, people with limited English proficiency, people who are unhoused, or others who have a higher risk of Severe or Fatal Injury resulting from a collision with a motor vehicle, due to limited access to efficient and affordable transportation options; unsafe neighborhood transit infrastructure; or population-specific risk factors.
6. “Severe Injury” means any injury other than fatal which results in one or more of the following: severe laceration resulting in exposure of underlying tissues/muscle/organs or resulting in significant loss of blood; broken or distorted extremity (arm or leg); crush injuries; suspected skull, chest or abdominal injury other than bruises or minor lacerations; significant burns (second and third degree burns over 10% or more of the body); unconsciousness when taken from the crash scene; and, or paralysis ~~[definition, perhaps one from an existing local or state traffic data collection policy or from, for example, Model Minimum Uniform Crash Criteria (5th ed., 2017) or KABCO Injury Classification Scale and Definitions]~~.
7. “Traffic Safety Data” means data collected for each traffic collision that results in a Fatal or Severe Injury and, to the extent possible, shall include but are not limited to the following data elements: (a) exact location; (b) date and time of day; (c) category of each road user involved (e.g., pedestrian, bicyclist, scooter rider, driver of motor vehicle); (d) type of vehicle(s) involved, if applicable (e.g., motorcycle, car, bus, commercial truck); (e) whether any road users were fatally or severely injured; (f) ages of people involved; (g) collision factors (e.g., unsafe speed, driver distraction, poor lighting); and (h) the movement preceding the collision (e.g., left turn, changing lanes).
8. “Vulnerable Road Users” means pedestrians, bicyclists, people using mobility devices, scooter riders, and any other road users who are at high risk of Severe or Fatal Injury resulting from a collision with a motor vehicle.

### C. VISION ZERO INTERDEPARTMENTAL TASK FORCE

1. The purpose of the Interdepartmental Task Force (“Task Force”) is to develop and

implement a Vision Zero action plan, ensuring coordination across all relevant departments, agencies, and stakeholders. The Vision Zero Interdepartmental Task Force is hereby established and shall comprise of a representative of the Providence City Council, the Mayor (or designee) and the Directors (or designees) of the Departments of Public Works, Public Safety, Planning and Development, ~~Healthy Communities~~, Public Property, the School Department or School Board, and the City Solicitor's Office.

2. The Director of Planning and Development (or designee) shall chair the Task Force and be responsible for ensuring that the duties of the Task Force set forth in Section C.3 are completed in a timely manner.
3. The Task Force shall perform the following tasks:
  - a. Within [12] months of the effective date of this Policy, (1) develop and finalize an updated Vision Zero Action Plan ("Action Plan") and (2) present the Action Plan to the Mayor and the City Council. This will incorporate and leverage existing plans and policies already in place – including but not limited to the Climate Justice Plan, the Great Streets Plan, the Green and Complete Street Ordinance, the North Main Street Corridor Revitalization Study.
  - b. Convene its first meeting no later than [30] days from the effective date of this Policy and meet at least monthly until the Action Plan is finalized, and thereafter quarterly until the Action Plan and any revisions have been fully implemented.
  - c. Immediately begin collection and analysis of Traffic Safety Data so that such data can be used to develop the Action Plan; and put in place a system for collecting and analyzing such data on an ongoing basis.
  - d. Oversee development, implementation, and evaluation of the Action Plan pursuant to Sections [E and F] of this Policy. As part of development and implementation, the Task Force shall incorporate existing pedestrian and bicycling safety initiatives into the Action Plan and coordinate existing pedestrian and bicycling safety initiatives across departments as needed.
  - e. Revise the Action Plan, as needed.
  - f. Report on implementation of the Action Plan and progress toward Vision Zero goals pursuant to Section [G] of this Policy.



- g. Consult with the Advisory Group throughout the process of developing, implementing, evaluating, and reporting on the Action Plan, as set forth in Section [D] of this Policy.
- h. Maintain a comprehensive public web page to share information on the City of Providence's Vision Zero endeavors – for example, relevant data; the adopted Resolution; the Action Plan and any updates to it; and progress on the strategies in the Action Plan – as well as to solicit feedback on safety concerns, projects, and strategies.

#### **D. VISION ZERO ADVISORY GROUP**

1. The purpose of the Advisory Group is to provide community input from a range of stakeholders to the Task Force as it develops, implements, evaluates, and reports on the Action Plan or makes revisions thereto. The Task Force shall meet and consult with the Advisory Group with respect to these matters on an as-needed basis until the Action Plan and any revisions thereto have been fully implemented and reported.
2. The Green and Complete Streets Advisory Council shall serve as the Vision Zero Advisory Group.
3. The Advisory Group shall perform the following tasks:
  - a. Consult with community members about their concerns, priorities, and goals on an ongoing basis, not just during initial policy development.
  - b. Collaborate with the community and gather feedback from community members and stakeholders in order to communicate this information to the Task Force.
  - c. Work with the community to identify emerging issues or address existing problems.
  - d. Empower community members to address issues that matter to them by sharing decision-making responsibilities.

#### **E. VISION ZERO ACTION PLAN**

##### **1. Action Plan Guiding Principles**

The Vision Zero Action Plan shall be guided by the following principles:

- a. Human life shall be prioritized over ease of movement for motor vehicles.
- b. People inevitably make mistakes, but these mistakes should not result in death or severe injury; therefore, transportation systems are designed to anticipate these errors so that all transportation users can function safely within the system.
- c. It is unacceptable for any one group to suffer disproportionate effects of traffic collisions based on their race, age, ability, or income.

## **2. Action Plan Elements**

- a. The Action Plan shall commit to [three or more] strategies for implementation with respect to each of the four key elements (Safe Speed, Safe Streets, Safety Culture, and Safety Collaboration), resulting in a minimum of [12] strategies.

- i. *Safe Speed*

- The Safe Speed element encompasses strategies for managing vehicle speeds for the safety of all road users, particularly Vulnerable Road Users within High-Injury Networks.

- ii. *Safe Streets*

- In addition to the strategies of the Safe Speed element, street design strategies in the Safe Streets element use different approaches to create safe roadways for all users, particularly Vulnerable Road Users.

- iii. *Safety Culture*

- This element focuses on strategies that empower people to take community action to advance Vision Zero goals and strategies that promote a culture of safe driving, walking, and biking.

- iv. *Safety Collaboration*

- This element focuses on collaboration within a jurisdiction; between jurisdictions with county, regional, state, or federal entities; and with community partners – all designed to advance Vision Zero goals.

- b. For each individual strategy identified in the Action Plan, the Action Plan shall, at a minimum, (1) set deadlines for implementation, (2) identify the lead person(s) and department responsible for implementation, (3) identify an adequate funding source or actions needed to obtain funding, (4) specify performance goals and

metrics, and (5) include a Fair Process Checklist as set forth in Section E.3.d.

### **3. Action Plan Process**

In developing the Action Plan, the Task Force shall adhere to the following procedural elements:

a. Equity

The Task Force shall evaluate the implications of all strategies under consideration to (1) prioritize strategies that advance Vision Zero goals in Historically Underinvested Areas and in High-Injury Networks; and (2) ensure that they do not exacerbate existing health, economic, or other disparities in Historically Underinvested Areas.

b. Community Engagement

The Task Force shall establish a process for ensuring that the voices of community members – especially residents in Historically Underinvested Areas, members of Priority Populations, and Vulnerable Road Users – are heard and reflected in (1) development of the Action Plan and (2) ongoing implementation and revision of the Action Plan.

c. Data-Driven Decisions

The Task Force shall ensure that Action Plan strategies are based on the Traffic Safety Data collected and maintained pursuant to Section C.3.c of this Policy.

## **F. ONGOING IMPLEMENTATION & EVALUATION**

The Task Force shall be responsible for ongoing implementation and oversight of the Action Plan, including the following tasks:

1. Implementation of all strategies identified in the Action Plan, prioritizing strategies that benefit Historically Underinvested Areas and High-Injury Networks
2. Identification of funding needs and oversight of strategies to obtain the funding needed to fully implement the Action Plan, prioritizing Historically Underinvested Areas and High-Injury Networks
3. Obtaining the data necessary to determine whether the performance goals for each strategy have been met; assessing whether the goals have been met based on these data; and if any goals have not been met, ascertaining the reasons

4. Pursuit and oversight of any partnerships with other public or private entities necessary to implementation of the Action Plan
5. Revision of the Action Plan as needed to meet the Vision Zero goals of the Resolution

#### **G. REQUIREMENTS FOR REPORTING & COMMUNITY MEETINGS**

1. Within [6] months of the effective date of this Policy, the Task Force shall submit to the City Council and the Mayor's Office and make publicly available online a written report on the progress made toward finalizing the Action Plan.
2. Within [6] months of finalizing the Action Plan and annually thereafter, the Task Force shall submit to the City Council and the Mayor's Office and make publicly available online a written implementation report based on the performance goals of the Action Plan. The implementation report shall include, at a minimum, the following items:
  - a. An overview of progress toward full implementation of the Action Plan (and any revisions thereto) and the Vision Zero goals of the Resolution
  - b. The status of all strategies set forth in the Action Plan (and any revisions thereto), including specific highlighting of the status of all strategies benefitting Historically Underinvested Areas and High-Injury Networks
  - c. The status of funding necessary for implementation of the Action Plan, and steps taken to address any unmet funding needs
  - d. A description of any unanticipated obstacles to implementation of the Action Plan, and plans to address those obstacles
3. Within [30] days of the dissemination of a report as set forth in Section [G.1 or G.2], two or more members of the Task Force shall report to the public in at least two public forums – at least one of which is in an area identified in the Action Plan as a Historically Underinvested Area – on the progress made in developing or implementing the Action Plan and shall provide a substantial opportunity for meaningful virtual and in-person public comment.

## References

1. What is Vision Zero? Vision Zero Network website: [visionzeronetWORK.org/about/what-is-vision-zero/](https://visionzeronetWORK.org/about/what-is-vision-zero/).
2. *An Analysis of Traffic Fatalities by Race and Ethnicity*. Washington, DC: Governors Highway Safety Association; 2021. [ghsa.org/sites/default/files/2021-06/An%20Analysis%20of%20Traffic%20Fatalities%20by%20Race%20and%20Ethnicity.pdf](https://ghsa.org/sites/default/files/2021-06/An%20Analysis%20of%20Traffic%20Fatalities%20by%20Race%20and%20Ethnicity.pdf).
3. Baumgartner FR, Epp DA, Shoub K. *Suspect Citizens: What 20 Million Traffic Stops Tell Us About Policing and Race*. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press; 2018.
4. Social determinants of traffic fatality: a health disparity exposed on our roadways. Long Island Health Collaborative website: [lihealthcollab.org/news-and-blog/social-determinants-of-traffic-fatality-a-health-disparity-exposed-on-our-roadways](https://lihealthcollab.org/news-and-blog/social-determinants-of-traffic-fatality-a-health-disparity-exposed-on-our-roadways). July 9, 2021.
5. Barajas JM. Biking where Black: connecting transportation planning and infrastructure to disproportionate policing. *Transportation Res Part D: Transportation Environ*. 2021;99:103027. [doi.org/10.1016/j.trd.2021.103027](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.trd.2021.103027).
6. 10 leading causes of death, United States, 2020, both sexes, all ages, all races. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website: [wisqars.cdc.gov/data/lcd/home](https://wisqars.cdc.gov/data/lcd/home).
7. Institute of Transportation Engineers; Road to Zero Coalition; and RTZ Safe System Working Group. Safe System. Institute of Transportation Engineers website: [ite.org/technical-resources/topics/safe-systems/](https://ite.org/technical-resources/topics/safe-systems/).
8. Ferrier K. Landmark national study urges safety over speed. Vision Zero Network website: [visionzeronetWORK.org/safety-over-speed](https://visionzeronetWORK.org/safety-over-speed). July 25, 2017.
9. Fox J, Shahum L. *Vision Zero Equity: Strategies for Practitioners*. Oakland, CA: Vision Zero Network; 2017.
10. *Targeted Fines and Fees Against Communities of Color: Civil Rights and Constitutional Implications*. Washington, DC: US Commission on Civil Rights; 2017.
11. *Investigation of the Ferguson Police Department*. Washington, DC: Civil Rights Division, US Department of Justice; 2015.
12. Bingham S, Calhoun S, Case A, et al. *Paying More for Being Poor: Bias and Disparity in California's Traffic Court System*. San Francisco, CA: Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights of the San Francisco Bay Area; 2017.
13. Rodriguez JF. Homeless residents at high risk of death in traffic collisions. *San Francisco Examiner*. September 3, 2019. [sfxaminer.com/news/homeless-residents-at-high-risk-of-death-in-traffic-collisions/](https://sfxaminer.com/news/homeless-residents-at-high-risk-of-death-in-traffic-collisions/).
14. *The Safe System Approach*. Washington, DC: Federal Highway Administration, US Department of Transportation; 2017. [safety.fhwa.dot.gov/zerodeaths/docs/FHWA\\_SafeSystem\\_Brochure\\_V9\\_508\\_200717.pdf](https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/zerodeaths/docs/FHWA_SafeSystem_Brochure_V9_508_200717.pdf).
15. Ferrier K. Landmark national study urges safety over speed. Vision Zero Network website: [visionzeronetWORK.org/safety-over-speed](https://visionzeronetWORK.org/safety-over-speed). July 25, 2017.
16. Speed. Insurance Institute for Highway Safety & Highway Loss Data Institute website: [iihs.org/topics/speed](https://iihs.org/topics/speed). Updated May 2021.
17. Bellis R. *Dangerous by Design 2021*. Washington, DC: Smart Growth America; 2021. [smartgrowthamerica.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Dangerous-By-Design-2021-update.pdf](https://smartgrowthamerica.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Dangerous-By-Design-2021-update.pdf).