



City of Arts & Innovation

City Council Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL **DATE: APRIL 22, 2025**
FROM: PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT **WARDS: ALL**
SUBJECT: PROPOSED VISION ZERO RESOLUTION & VISION ZERO ACTION PLAN

ISSUE:

Consider adoption of a Resolution to establish a Vision Zero policy to work towards a fifty percent reduction of traffic deaths and severe injuries by 2040 and consider directing staff to develop a Vision Zero Action Plan (VZAP) in alignment with existing national, state, and regional programs and grant funding requirements.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the City Council:

1. Adopt a Resolution establishing a Vision Zero policy to work towards a fifty percent reduction of preventable traffic deaths and severe injuries by 2040 (Attachment 1); and
2. Direct staff to develop a City of Riverside Vision Zero Action Plan (VZAP) in alignment with existing national, state, and regional programs and grant funding requirements.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS:

On March 13, 2025, the Mobility & Infrastructure Committee reviewed the proposed resolution establishing a Vision Zero policy, and directed staff to develop a Vision Zero Action Plan by a unanimous vote with all 3 Committee members present and recommended approval as detailed within the report.

BACKGROUND:

Section 24112 of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (also referred to as the “Bipartisan Infrastructure Law” or “BIL”) established the discretionary Safe Streets For All (SS4A) Grant Program with \$5 billion dollars in advanced appropriations that are intended to be appropriated equally over the five-year period of 2022 through 2026.

The purpose of SS4A grants is to improve roadway safety by significantly reducing or eliminating roadway fatalities and serious injuries through a safety action plan development, refinement and

implementation focused on all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, public transportation, motorists, personal conveyance and micro mobility, and commercial vehicle operators.

The SS4A grant program provides funding for two main types of grants: 1.) Planning and Demonstration Grants for comprehensive safety action plans, including supplemental safety planning, and/or safety demonstration activities; 2.) and Implementation Grants to adopt strategies and/or construct projects that are consistent with an existing Action Plan.

The Federal share of a SS4A grant may not exceed 80% of total eligible activity costs. Recipients are required to contribute a local matching share of no less than 20% of eligible activity costs.

On July 8, 2023, the Public Works Department submitted a grant application named *South Main Street Complete Streets Project* along with supplemental planning components to the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) under the Safe Streets For All (SS4A) Grant Program. The supplemental planning component portion of the grant application included funding to either update the existing Local Roadway Safety Plan (LRSP) or develop a new Vision Zero Action Plan (VZAP).

On December 14, 2023, the USDOT awarded the city's grant application, and a portion of the supplemental planning component allocated \$240,000, with the City providing a matching fund of \$60,000 toward the VZAP effort (a total of \$300,000 available).

The City is proposing to develop a transformative Vision Zero Action Plan (VZAP) in lieu of an update to the existing Local Roadway Safety Plan in order to ensure the city's ongoing eligibility for grant funding, elevate the city's commitment to significantly reduce traffic deaths, align the city's efforts with regional, state and nationwide traffic safety initiatives, and execute a public statement declaring that preventable loss of life or serious injury on public roadways is unacceptable.

DISCUSSION:

The City is proposing the adoption of a resolution to establish a Vision Zero policy to work towards fifty percent reduction of traffic deaths and severe injuries in the City of Riverside by 2040 and directing staff to develop a Vision Zero Action Plan (VZAP). Contingent upon completion of a Vision Zero Action Plan, the city will re-evaluate the targets for the Vision Zero Resolution.

The primary safety goal of the Vision Zero strategy is to work towards the eventual elimination of preventable traffic-related fatalities and serious injuries among all road users across the transportation system, while increasing safety, health, and equitable mobility for all. More than 50 U.S. cities, counties, and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) have publicly committed to the Vision Zero strategy. In the state of California alone, over 15 local agencies have committed to a Vision Zero Network including, but not limited to, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and San Diego to name a few. Importantly, new grant funding opportunities related to traffic safety often encourage or require that applicants have an adopted Vision Zero strategy and corresponding public statement.

In the United States, zero deaths initiatives are often referred to as Vision Zero or Toward Zero Deaths: regardless of the title, each initiative advocates for agencies to align with the Safe System Approach, which acknowledges that road users make mistakes and that system managers (transportation agencies, vehicle manufacturers, law enforcement, post-crash care personnel, etc.) should design and manage the road system and adopt related policies to reduce the probability that those errors do not result in serious injuries or fatalities.

The Problem

Based on the existing Local Roadway Safety Plan (LRSP), the city of Riverside averages 22 fatal traffic collisions and 65 severe injury collisions each year for the 5-year study period of July 2017 to June 2022 as shown in Figure 1.

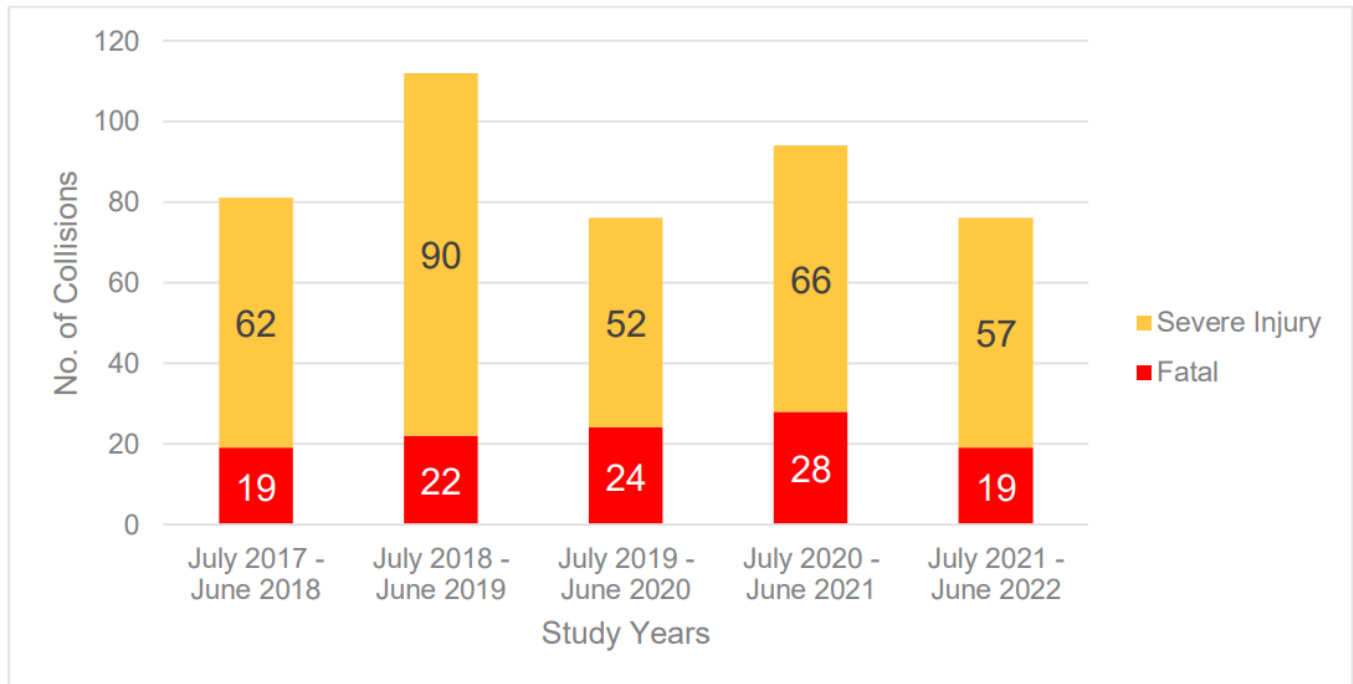


Figure 1: Riverside Local Roadway Safety Plan (LRSP) – Fatal & Severe Injury Collisions (2017-2022).

While the city currently implements multiple efforts in addressing traffic safety concerns including engineering construction of proven safety countermeasures, public safety education campaigns, pursuit of traffic safety construction funds, and operational traffic safety enforcements, the city lacks the public commitment documenting an eventual goal of zero roadway fatalities and serious injuries.

Vision Zero Resolution and Action Plan

According to the Vision Zero Network: Vision Zero is not a slogan, not a tagline, not even just a program. It is a fundamentally different way to approach traffic safety. Communities that want to succeed at Vision Zero need to acknowledge that business as usual is not enough, and that systemic changes are needed to make meaningful progress. Vision Zero is a multidisciplinary approach, bringing together diverse and necessary stakeholders to address this complex problem.¹ By adopting a Resolution to establish a Vision Zero policy and directing staff to develop a Vision Zero Action Plan, the City acknowledges that many factors contribute to safe mobility - including roadway design, driver speeds, driver and pedestrian behaviors, technology, policies.

The components of the Vision Zero Action Plan consist of:

- Political Commitment with the highest-ranking officials setting a goal for zero traffic fatalities and severe injuries
- Multi-disciplinary leadership committee leading the planning effort
- Action Plan implemented with clear strategies and owners of strategies
- Equity establishing inclusive and representative processes and outcomes
- Cooperation and Collaboration among relevant governmental agencies and communities
- System-based approach focusing on built environment & emphasis of preventable loss
- Data-driven traffic safety priorities to address the greatest needs and impact
- Comprehensive community engagement to provide feedback opportunities
- Transparency to provide annual updates on Action Plan and performance measures

¹ Source: [Vision Zero Recognition Program | Vision Zero Network](#)

Traffic Safety Grant Requirements

The Safe Streets For All Grant (SS4A) Program includes a certification criteria worksheet for grant application competitiveness. One of the criteria is for a local agency to establish a Leadership Commitment and Goal Setting towards an eventual goal of zero roadway fatalities and serious injuries by a specific date. In the absence of a Vision Zero planning document, the current strategy is to set a target of fifty percent reduction in fatal and severe injury traffic collisions by 2040.

By adopting a Vision Zero Resolution, the city would meet this grant certification requirement and would increase the city's competitiveness when pursuing grant funds under the nationwide highly competitive program.

The City would also increase its competitiveness when pursuing other traffic safety grant programs such as the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP), Active Transportation Program (ATP), and Senate Bill (SB) 821 Program.

Bicycle Friendly Community Designation

The League of American Bicyclists was established in 1880 and helps build better places for people to bike and empowers changemakers to build safer biking communities. The nationwide movement has established a Bicycle Friendly America program which is a tool for states, communities, businesses, and universities to make bicycling a real transportation and recreation option for all and establish recognition to communities implementing bicycle policies well.

Due to the City's commitment to biking policies and programs, the City of Riverside has been recognized with the distinction as a Bronze Level bike community since 2009 under the Bicycle Friendly Community Program.

One of the key steps to elevate the city's Bronze Level distinction to a Silver Level designation is to adopt a goal to eliminate preventable traffic fatalities and serious injuries and support the goal with a Vision Zero Policy to identify specific strategies to reduce traffic deaths for all road users, including bicyclists and pedestrians as indicated in Attachment 4.

The establishment of a VZAP would be consistent with the city's bicycle policies and programs and would support the city's pursuit of a Silver Level distinction as a Bicycle Friendly Community.

Blue Zones in Riverside

Blue Zones use years of research and scientifically proven lessons of longevity, health, and happiness from the longest-lived cultures in the world to transform community environments so healthy choices are easiest to make.

In March 2024, the City received a \$1 Million "Connecting Neighbors to Neighbors" grant to develop a resident-led, two-year effort in the Arlanza neighborhood to address health and sustainability concerns - [City of Riverside Launches "Blue Zones" Project to Increase Public Health and Longevity in Arlanza Neighborhood | riversideca.gov](https://www.riversideca.gov/newsroom/2024/03/20/connecting-neighbors-to-neighbors-grant).

One of the strategies listed in the Riverside Opportunities document for the Blue Zone project is to "Adopt Vision Zero Resolution and Implement Strategy" to create measurable steps towards transformation in Riverside (Attachment 8).

Alignment with National, State and Regional Traffic Safety Initiatives and Policies

The United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) National Roadway Safety Strategy (NRSS) outlines the USDOT's comprehensive approach to significantly reducing serious injuries and deaths on our Nation's highways, roads, and streets. This is the first step in working toward an ambitious long-term goal of reaching zero roadway fatalities. <https://www.transportation.gov/nrss/usdot-national-roadway-safety-strategy>

The Institute of Transportation Engineers, (ITE), a national traffic engineering organization, has established a Vision Zero Committee with an intent to develop "a strategy to eliminate all traffic fatalities and severe injuries, while increasing safe, healthy, equitable mobility for all." <https://www.ite.org/technical-resources/topics/transportation-safety/vision-zero-standing-committee>. ITE has also recently developed a Safety Roadmap and Action Plan which documents its vision to achieve zero roadway fatalities. The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) supports the Toward Zero Deaths (TZD) initiative, which is a national strategy on highway safety to advocate for eliminating serious injuries and deaths on our nation's roadways, conceptualized by safety practitioners, researchers, advocates, and others from a variety of disciplines. The strategy calls for all stakeholders to champion the idea that one death on our nation's roadways is too many, and we must all work together to bring the annual number of roadway deaths down to zero. https://www.towardzerodeaths.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/TZD_National_Strategy.pdf

The California Department of Transportation (CALTRANS) issued the Director's Policy (DP-36) on February 15, 2022 (Attachment 5) (https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/safety-programs/documents/policy/dp_36-a11y.pdf) to establish a public statement indicating CALTRAN's vision to eliminate preventable fatalities and serious injuries to California's roadways by 2050 and provide safer outcomes for all communities.

The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) is the largest Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) in the United States covering six counties (Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino and Ventura). On February 4, 2021, SCAG adopted a Regional Safety Policy to commit to working with partner agencies to encourage and support actions towards the elimination of preventable transportation-related fatalities and serious injuries by 2050, if not

sooner, in Southern California as documented in the Resolution 21-629-1 https://scag.ca.gov/sites/main/files/file-attachments/scag_resolution_no_21-629-1.pdf

The City of Riverside's proposed Vision Zero Action Plan project would align the city's traffic safety initiative efforts with already established policies and programs with the nation, the state and the southern California region.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This proposal follows **Strategic Priority 2 – Community Well-Being** and **Goal 2.4** – Support programs and innovations that enhance community safety, encourage neighborhood engagement, and build public trust, **Strategic Priority 2 – Community Well-Being** and **Goal 2.5** – Foster relationships between community members, partner organizations, and public safety professionals to define, prioritize, and address community safety and social service needs, and **Strategic Priority 6 – Infrastructure, Mobility & Connectivity** and **Goal 6.2** – Maintain, protect and improve assets and infrastructure within the City's built environment to ensure and enhance reliability, resiliency, sustainability, and facilitate connectivity. Additionally, the proposed action aligns with the cross-cutting threads as demonstrated below:

1. **Community Trust** – Throughout the development process for the upcoming Vision Zero Action Plan (VZAP), the program will conduct multiple community outreach events through multiple stakeholder groups representing the interests of residents, public safety, community health, education, and bicycle advocates. The project management team anticipates conducting several stakeholder meetings to discuss the Vision Zero Action Plan within each of the seven (7) Wards.
2. **Equity** – The development of the Vision Zero Action Plan is a tool that helps promote the safe usage of City roads by motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians that utilize the public streets and roadways across the entirety of the City.
3. **Fiscal Responsibility** – The VZAP will be a strategy that satisfies the minimum eligibility requirements for traffic safety grant applications and provides the means to empower staff to easily pursue safety grant applications for improving roadway safety. The VZAP will result in a master plan document that provides a blueprint for prioritized action items and pursue grant funds that can be utilized to improve the traffic safety of the community.
4. **Innovation** – In addition to creating a data driven safety analysis document, the VZAP goes beyond the city's existing Local Roadway Safety Plan (LRSP), elevates the city's public commitment to saving lives, and establishes a strategy to eliminate all preventable traffic fatalities and severe injuries, while increasing safe, healthy, equitable mobility for all.
5. **Sustainability & Resiliency** – As a living document, the VZAP will be typically valid for 5 years and can be built upon in the future. The VZAP supports the City's goals for sustainability and its attention to community health, safety, and resident resilience.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with the adoption of the Resolution and development of a Vision Zero Action Plan (VZAP).

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Certified as to
availability of funds: Kristie Thomas, Finance Director / Assistant Chief Financial Officer
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Approved as to form: Jack Liu, Interim City Attorney

Attachments:

1. Resolution
2. Components of a Vision Zero Commitment
3. Safe Streets for All (SS4A) Program Certification Worksheet Excerpt
4. Riverside Blue Zones
5. CALTRANS Vision Zero Director's Policy
6. Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) Vision Zero Resolution
7. Presentation