



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA
NEIGHBORHOOD ADVISORY COUNCIL REPORT

AGENDA DATE: January 9, 2019
TO: Neighborhood Advisory Council
FROM: Rob Dayton, Transportation Planning and Parking Manager
SUBJECT: City of Santa Barbara Vision Zero Policy and Strategy

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Neighborhood Advisory Council hear a presentation from staff regarding the City of Santa Barbara's Vision Zero Policy and Strategy.

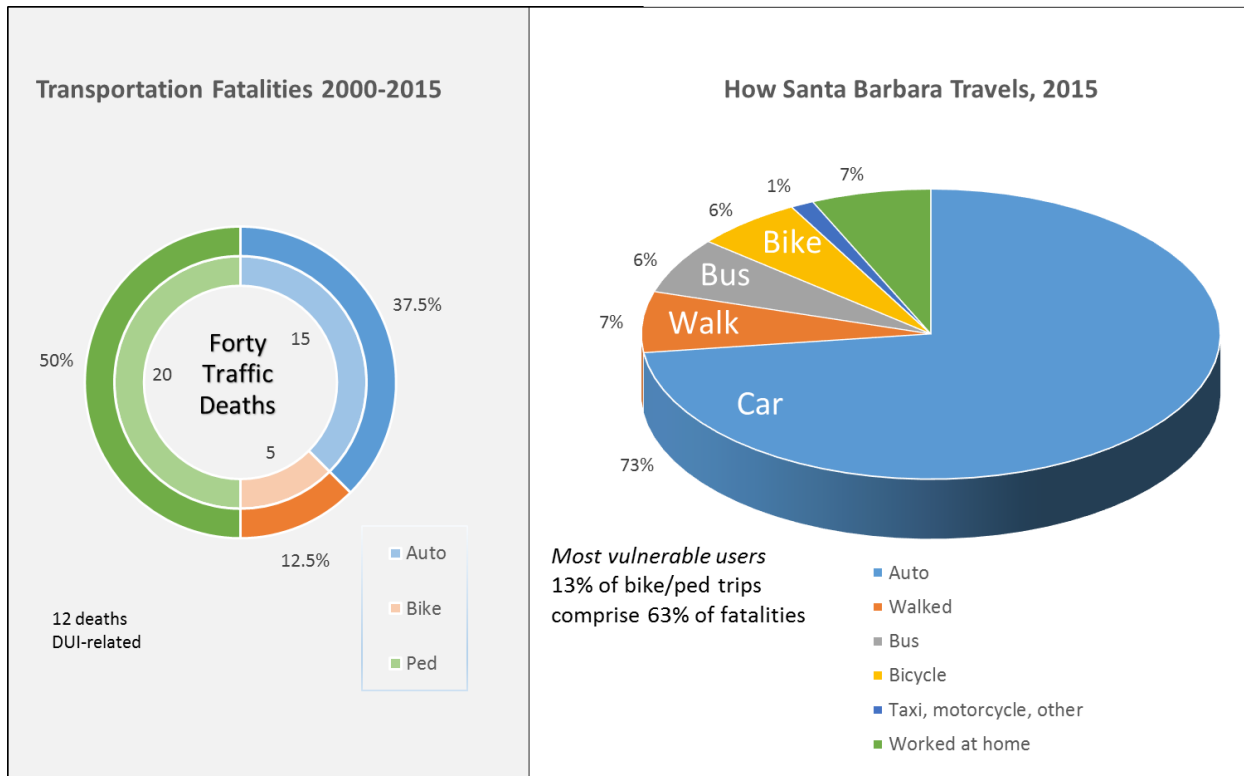
DISCUSSION:

Background

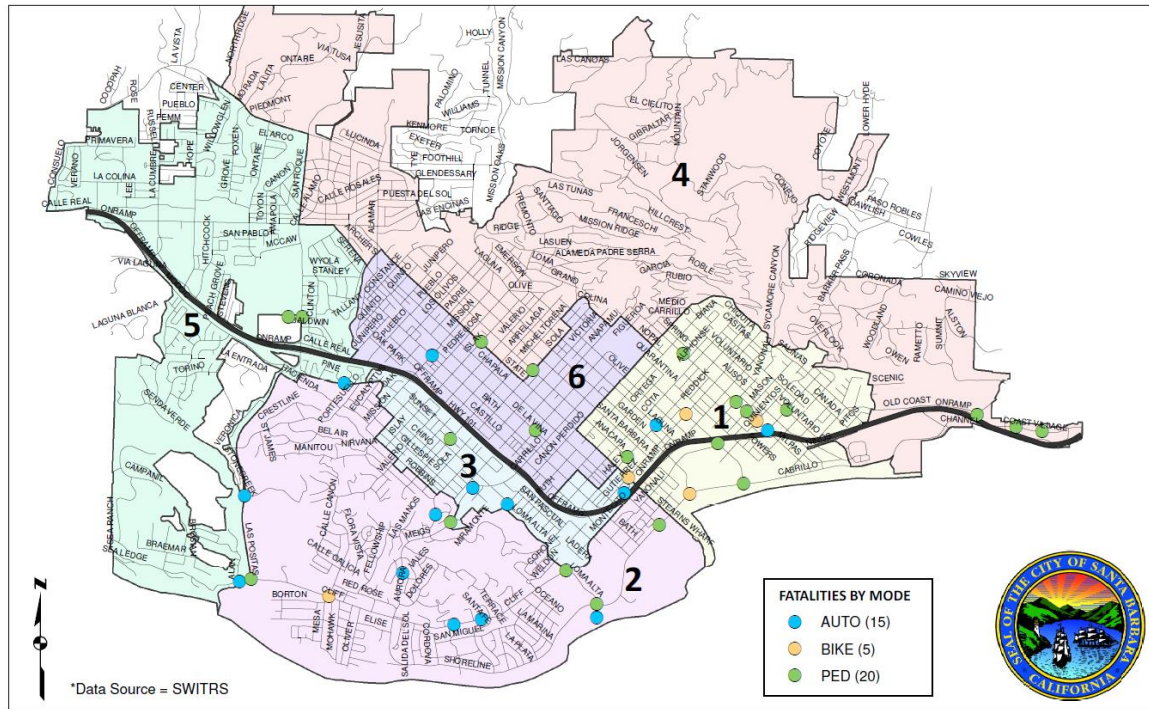
Vision Zero (VZ) contains the philosophy that deaths of the traveling public are preventable and that society should not accept that any person should be killed or seriously injured while using the transportation system. VZ promotes an additional goal of building more safety and livability into a city's roadway system in order to better protect all people who move about a city every day.

Vision Zero originated in Sweden in 1997, and since then, the number of traffic-related deaths there have been reduced by half. In 2013, Sweden had 264 traffic-related fatalities, a record-breaking low, and a decrease from 572 deaths in 1995. Sweden's traffic related deaths have gone down while the number of cars in circulation and the number of miles driven during the same period have grown.

Within the City of Santa Barbara, there were 40 roadway fatalities between 2000-2015, while 63 percent of the victims were pedestrians (20) and bicyclists (5). Cyclists and pedestrians are considered the most vulnerable road users because a disproportionate percentage of fatalities exist in the number of cyclists and pedestrians compared to motorists. Vision Zero strategies tend to focus on reducing fatalities for this mode of travel. Additionally in the case of Santa Barbara, driving under the influence (DUI) is a contributing factor to serious collisions and will also need further attention, enforcement and education. Twelve of the forty fatalities were DUI-related.



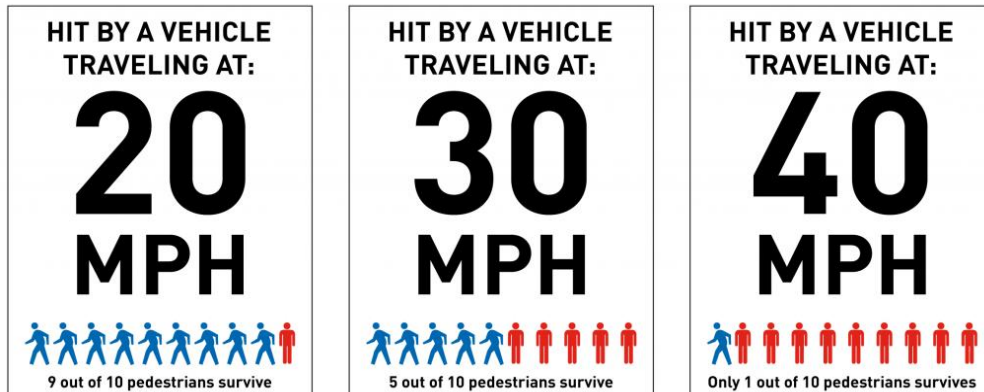
Vision Zero philosophy states that "no foreseeable accident should be more severe than the tolerance of the human in order not to receive an injury that causes long term health loss." This means that in a safe transportation system, unavoidable collisions should not reach the limit of the human tolerance. Vision Zero acknowledges that accidents cannot be totally avoided; hence, the basis for this concept is built around avoiding deaths and serious injuries.



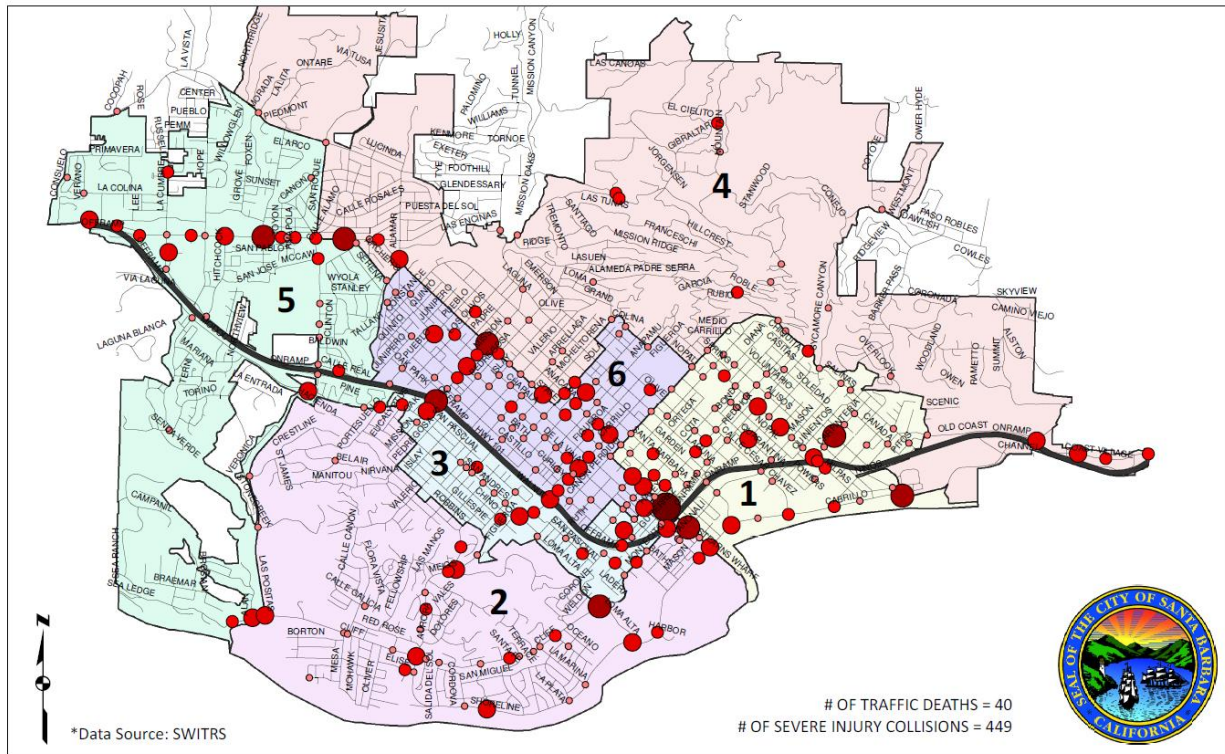
15 YEAR (2001-2015) FATALITIES BY MODE

Vision Zero proponents point out that the human tolerance for a pedestrian hit by a well-designed car will be exceeded if the vehicle is travelling over 20 mph. If a higher speed in urban areas is desired, the option is to separate pedestrian crossings from the traffic. This grade-separation condition exists in Santa Barbara for several pedestrian/bike crossings and underpasses of U.S. 101. If at-grade pedestrian crossings are unsafe, they should be redesigned to generate vehicle speeds of a maximum of 20 mph at pedestrian crossing areas. As is the case in Santa Barbara, some locations that may warrant grade separation will be cost-prohibitive to some degree. Therefore a City policy will require strategic focus on corridors with the greatest number of severe collisions, as well as a potential for practical, fundable solutions.

Relationship of Vehicle Speed to Odds of Pedestrian Death in Collision



Anticipating that people will make mistakes, other Vision Zero programs use a "safe system" approach that prioritizes safety by creating safer roads, slowing vehicular speeds in certain locations, providing enhanced biking/walking infrastructure, educating the public of their role and enforcing laws to support safer behavior on the roads. This approach leads to the reduction or elimination of "severe collisions," defined as one where police reports indicates that at least one person needed immediate medical attention, usually an ambulance trip to a hospital emergency room.



15 YEAR (2001-2015) SEVERE/FATAL COLLISIONS

On December 6, 2016, Council adopted a Vision Zero Policy to reduce fatal and severe transportation-related collisions by 2030 and to prioritize transportation safety. The fundamental philosophy of Vision Zero is that transportation-related deaths are unacceptable and preventable.

On September 11, 2018, Council adopted the Santa Barbara Vision Zero Strategy 2030 (Vision Zero Strategy) in order to implement the City’s Vision Zero Policy. The Vision Zero Strategy aims to help protect the public, assign shared responsibility, and reimagine a safer future for all street users.

The Vision Zero Strategy (Attached) includes seven Core Principles, a “Safety First” mentality, and targeted efforts for Priority Corridors to eliminate traffic-related deaths or serious injuries. The Vision Zero Strategy’s seven Core Principles encourage shared responsibility and change the fundamental approach to traffic safety in Santa Barbara.

The Vision Zero Strategy Core Principles are:

1. **Life is Most Important.** The protection of human life and health must be the overriding goal of traffic planning and engineering, taking priority over vehicle speeds and other objectives.

2. **Every Person Matters.** Everyone has the right to be safe on our streets, regardless of the way they choose to travel.
3. **People Make Mistakes.** In order to prevent and reduce death and serious injury, traffic systems can and should be designed to account for the inevitability of human error.
4. **Focus on Dangerous Locations and Behaviors.** City engineering and enforcement efforts will be informed by accurate and timely collision data and focus first on the most problematic locations, crash types, and behaviors.
5. **Drivers Have a Critical Responsibility.** When we drive, we control a machine that can inflict a great deal of physical harm. As drivers, we have a critical responsibility for the safety of others. We can be acting criminally when we drive and park in ways that put others at risk.
6. **Pedestrians and Cyclists are the Most Vulnerable Road Users.** Because they have the most to lose, pedestrians and cyclists must abide by laws, which are in place to keep them safe.
7. **The Government Shares Responsibility for Safe Streets.** All elected officials and appropriate government staff will need to collaborate and act to achieve Vision Zero.

The Vision Zero Strategy adopts a “Safety First” mentality that shifts transportation-related practices toward assigning maximum importance to preserving human life.

Transportation safety is addressed comprehensively in the Vision Zero Strategy through Evaluation, Engineering, Enforcement, and Education, referred to as the Four E’s. The Four E’s are described as follows:

1. **Evaluation: a data-driven review of collision statistics involving both the Police Department and Public Works transportation professionals.** Safety-first in this area means that we target our limited Public Works and Police Department resources at locations where data analyses indicate collisions are most likely to reoccur.
2. **Engineering: anticipating and reducing the effects of human error.** This work is done primarily by transportation professionals within the Public Works Department. Safety first thinking means resources will be focused on locations with recurring collisions and designs and plans will be created that are aimed at eliminating collision recurrence.
3. **Enforcement: ensuring safety laws are known and followed.** This is entirely implemented by the Police Department and other enforcement bodies. The City Police Department will report traffic statistics alongside crime statistics as part of its community policing and Vision Zero approach. This means that Police Department resources can also be discussed and allocated more closely based on safety statistics.

4. **Education: a public promotion of the “safety first” mentality.** This effort is organized by Public Works, and includes marketing strategies and the use of effective media tools to communicate a message to change the current thinking about collisions and dangerous driving behaviors.

The Vision Zero Strategy identifies Priority Corridors. These are areas with the highest concentrations of recent fatal and severe traffic collisions, and where initial transportation investments and efforts can be concentrated to effect the greatest change. The Four E’s will inform data-driven Vision Zero priorities through time, and adapt to changing behaviors, technologies, and risk factors.

SUBMITTED BY: Rob Dayton, Transportation Planning and Parking Manager

APPROVED BY: Matt Fore, Senior Assistant to the City Administrator