



## MEMORANDUM

TO: Transportation Commission  
FROM: Raymond Hess, Transportation Manager  
DATE: July 16, 2021  
SUBJECT: Speed Reduction Committee Recommendations and Accomplishments

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This memorandum is provided in response to Transportation Commission members who requested an update on the progress being made of the [Speed Reduction Committee Recommendations](#).

### Speed Reduction Committee Recommendations:

1. Dedicated Funding and Staff

*Status:*

Funding: The City sets aside 5% of its Act 51 gas tax funding for the ALT Fund. This funding is used exclusively for bicycle and pedestrian projects and maintenance. Additionally, set asides from the County Mental Health Millage have gone to crosswalk improvements and school safety improvements in recent years. Lastly, in the FY22 budget, City Council approved funding for several different bicycle/pedestrian safety initiatives: \$150,000 for curb extensions and centerline hardening/slow turn wedge deployments; \$100,000 for major streets traffic calming analysis; \$135,000 for uncontrolled crosswalk lighting needs (consistent with past budgets); \$75,000 for outreach for safety; and \$300,000 for Implementation Strategy and Quick Build deployments.

Staffing: In 2018, a new transportation team was created in the Engineering Department. This team was originally created by hiring the Transportation Manager (1 new position) and bringing together the Transportation Engineers (2 from Engineering), the Transportation Program Manager (1 from Systems Planning), and the Signs and Signals Team (12 from Public Works). The team was broadened in 2019 with the hiring of a third Transportation Engineer. Additionally, longstanding vacancies on the Signs and Signals Team were filled in early 2020 which brought that team to 14 employees. Lastly, a fourth Transportation Engineer with a focus on Vision Zero was approved by Council and recruited for heavily for a year starting in late 2019. After difficulty in finding a suitable candidate for this position, recruitment was paused in late 2020.

2. Road Design – Adopt City Policy of Using Safe Systems to Design Roadways

*Status:*

The [Moving Together Towards Vision Zero Transportation Plan Update](#) provides a systematic and data driven approach as to how to achieve safe systems. For example, the Transportation Plan specifically identifies Tier 1 and Tier 2 Safety corridors and intersections which should be

addressed in order to achieve Vision Zero. Numerous other strategies are identified in the Transportation Plan and staff is currently working on an implementation strategy scope, which may also provide suggestions on the hierarchy of needs for the City's roads.

Work is also underway to update the City's street design standards (known as the "orange book"). This work will result in standards that reflect contemporary practices and designs and are consistent with the Transportation Plan.

The Capital Improvement Program prioritization process was overhauled in 2020 and it incorporated elements of the Transportation Plan (draft at the time) into the scoring matrix. For example, projects along Tier 1 or Tier 2 Safety corridors were given added weight in the scoring process.

### 3. Increase Enforcement Efforts

#### *Status:*

The Police Department currently has an online [traffic enforcement request form](#) which enables residents to draw attention to areas of traffic concern. Engineering and Police Department staff have partnered on various projects in the past such as the "[Changing Driving Behavior](#)" study which evaluated the effectiveness of increased awareness and enforcement of drivers stopping for pedestrians in crosswalks. Lastly, the Police Department has been reporting crashes involving pedestrians to City Council on a monthly basis.

### 4. Expanded and Sustained Public Outreach Campaigns

#### *Status:*

The City takes engagement seriously and is constantly trying to improve its outreach methodologies. Most transportation projects have some sort of engagement which is tailored to the impact of the project (as detailed in [this memo to Council](#)). Additionally, all Transportation Team office staff have gone through the International Association for Public Participation workshops and are further supported by Systems Planning staff who specialize in outreach and engagement practices.

Specific examples of recent engagement efforts include: the Moving Together Towards Vision Zero Transportation Plan which had numerous engagement opportunities during the 2 year plan development process (as detailed in [Appendix C – Public Engagement Summary](#)); and the Healthy Streets initiatives in 2020 and 2021 which included front end engagement to solicit feedback on proposed deployment locations (as detailed in the [2021 engagement summary](#)).

### 5. Amend the Traffic Calming Program

#### *Status:*

City Council approved an updated residential Traffic Calming Program in [November 2018](#). Updated materials such as the handbook and petition form to reflect this update are available on the [Traffic Calming website](#).

In addition to the residential traffic calming program, there has been interest in the community to develop a 'major streets traffic calming program' as well. As mentioned above, City Council approved \$100,00 in funding in the FY22 budget to develop such a program. Staff is currently working on a scope for this work which is expected to kickoff in the coming months.

### 6. Lobby for speed changes on state-owned roads, starting with Washtenaw Avenue

#### *Status:*

Staff and members of the community have communicated concerns over the posted speed limit along Washtenaw for years. MDOT's methodology for setting speed limits, in partnership with

Michigan State Police, relies exclusively on the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile. MDOT stated they would require a resolution from City Council to evaluate *all* State trunklines and the resolution “must state the City is in agreement with any and all changes to speed limit as determined by [State Police] and MDOT and will support any changes identified.” As such, the City is hesitant to process a formal requests for a speed study as it may result in an increase in the posted speed limit (which was the previous result of such a request).

7. Create a Vision Zero Task Force

*Status:*

Since the Moving Together Towards Vision Zero Transportation Plan had a focus of Vision Zero, the Community Advisory Committee for the plan update was viewed by staff as having served as a Vision Zero Task Force during plan development. Now that the Transportation Plan is recently adopted, staff will transition to a more permanent Vision Zero Task Force. The current thinking is that the existing ALT Committee (which helps guide ALT fund investments and comments on other bike/ped initiatives) may be augmented with members of the Transportation Plan Community Advisory Committee to create a new Vision Zero Task Force.