



## MEMORANDUM

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**DATE:** May 4, 2018

**TO:** Transportation Commission

**FROM:** Eli Cooper, Transportation Program Manager

**CC:** Craig Hupy, Public Services Administrator  
Cresson Sloten, Systems Planning Manager  
Nick Hutchinson, City Engineer  
Cynthia Redinger, Traffic Engineer  
Robert Kellar, Communications Specialist  
Sgt. Bill Clock, AAPD Staff Sergeant  
Kayla Coleman, Systems Planning Analyst

**RE:** Vision Zero Implementation follow-up

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Questions submitted by email from the Transportation Commission related to the [Staff Response to Supporting Vision Zero - January update](#) are addressed below.

Commissioner question #1:

Quotes from the January Update and questions that arise: *"Current and ongoing activities include reviewing each transportation project during the design process and including appropriate safety and speed adjustment elements consistent with Vision Zero."* **What does "consistent with Vision Zero" mean for City staff? It seems that both Scio Church and Pauline DID NOT include Vision Zero concerns (as I would define them), so how Vision Zero does concerns factor into design parameters?**

Staff response #1:

Vision Zero is an overarching philosophy to eliminate serious injury and fatal crashes occurring on our transportation systems. Vision Zero considerations generally rely upon a framework of advancing a culture of transportation system and user safety through education, enforcement, engineering and emergency responses. In the context of the question, City engineering staff strive to integrate and balance public and stakeholder interest while applying best practices, to the maximum extent practicable, when planning, scoping and designing a road project.

Commissioner question #2:

*"To accelerate and further inclusion and implementation of Vision Zero at a system wide level, Staff has initiated the process of drafting a preliminary Request for Proposals (RFP) to procure a qualified consultant for the 2018/2019 Transportation Plan Update (TPU) project."* **Why is the City seeking a qualified consultant for implementation of Vision Zero instead of investing in what is necessary to train/educate staff and develop institutional knowledge? Case in point, how is Staff incorporating "Vision Zero elements" currently, if there is a documented need to hire a consultant?**

Staff response #2:

The effort to update a Comprehensive Plan component requires the effort of a large team with knowledge, expertise and resources beyond internal staff capacity and capabilities. The City's practice is designed to effectively and efficiently complete such an undertaking. Staff will engage and interact with the project team including subject matter experts, learning along the way and assuring the effort is sensitive to the City's setting and values and incorporated into city programs, procedures and practices. When the planning project is completed, the staff team is well positioned to continue to advance the work, in this case, implementation of the Vision Zero effort.

Commissioner question #3:

*"The TPU is to be based on Vision Zero Principles" [Transportation Plan Update]* **What principles, specifically?**

Staff response #3:

The City has embraced a Vision Zero Philosophy and is committed to undertaking a Vision Zero based transportation program built upon a foundation of stakeholder engagement defining our program through a comprehensive planning process.

Generally, Vision Zero is based on several principles according to the Vision Zero Network:

- Traffic deaths and severe injuries are preventable; therefore, none are acceptable.
- Human Life and health are prioritized within all aspects of transportation systems
- People will make mistakes; the transportation system should be designed so those mistakes aren't fatal.
- Transportation safety solutions must be addressed on a systems-level.
- Speed is recognized and prioritized as the fundamental factor in Crash Severity

**Emerging City of Ann Arbor Commitment (paraphrased from, and thanks to, FHWA):**

The City of Ann Arbor is committed to A2 BESAFE safety ethos with a Vision Zero philosophy of eliminating fatalities and serious injuries on our roadways. Under A2 BE SAFE the City has

initiated and embraced a safety culture with *shared values, actions, and behaviors that demonstrate a commitment to safety over competing goals and demands.*

Consensus among safety experts is that a safety culture exists in different forms. Two forms that resonate the most with governmental organizations including the A2 BESAFE program are an organizational safety culture and a public safety culture.

- *Organizational Safety Culture:* The extent to which safety is valued and pursued by an organization indicates the strength of that organization's safety culture. The organization is aware of potential hazards in its work environment and is prepared to react to incidents. Agency staff have safety in mind when planning, scoping, designing, and constructing a project or roadway. Employees regularly communicate the importance of safety with colleagues, customers, and contractors. Executive leaders are vocal supporters of safety and empower employees to seek innovative approaches to improving safety even if safety is not explicitly part of everyone's job title.
- *Public Safety Culture:* Communities including Ann Arbor that have a safety culture have citizens who understand the risks associated with transportation and choose to make safe choices when using the transportation system. Drivers in a community with a strong safety culture are likely to wear their seat belts and safety gear voluntarily, obey traffic laws, limit distractions, and refrain from operating a vehicle when impaired.

Vision Zero is a way of clearly and succinctly describing how our organization and staff approach safety. It acknowledges that even one death on our transportation system is unacceptable and basic principles such as broad institutionalization of the safety culture, a systems approach, and a recognition that the nature of humans to make mistakes means that infrastructure must be designed to mitigate driver error to the greatest extent possible.

Creating and sustaining a safety culture is integral to helping our community move toward zero deaths. In addition, safety culture is one of the *basic principles* on which our Vision Zero program is to be based. These principles include, but not be limited to:

- *Cultural change and sustainability* – A zero deaths vision requires a change—a shift in culture both within transportation and other organizational units as well as within the community. Everyone must accept that fatalities are unacceptable and preventable.
- Human Life and health are prioritized within all aspects of transportation systems
- *Acknowledgement of human fallibility* – The City's Vision Zero approach recognizes that humans make mistakes, and it is necessary to design a transportation system that reduces the number and severity of consequences resulting from those mistakes.
- *Systems approach* – The Vision Zero program encourages a better understanding of the interaction among the key elements of the transportation system: road users, roadways, and vehicles. It asks questions such as:

- What factors lead to crashes and on what types of roadways do serious and fatal crashes occur?
- When prevention fails and a crash does occur, how can we reduce the severity of the crash?
- How can we improve the safety of all parts of the system so that if one part fails, other parts will still protect transportation system users?
- *Shared responsibility* – Achieving Vision Zero requires a mutual understanding between transportation agencies and the public. All parties who build and use the transportation system should ensure appropriate system designs, enforce and obey traffic laws, and embrace a safety culture.
- Speed is recognized and prioritized as the fundamental factor in crash severity