

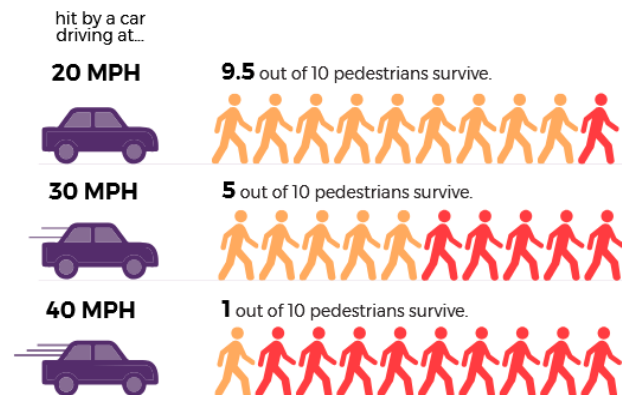
Hello City Council and Transportation Commission,

I wanted to express my disappointment with the Annual Safety Performance Report Out at the 11/19 Transportation Commission meeting. We have not met our Vision Zero goal which is not surprising. I certainly don't blame the city for that—it was extremely ambitious. Changing our street environment is a tremendous undertaking and will take a long time. The new projects on Pauline and Miller do give me some hope. Unfortunately, I find it disheartening to blame the cause of this unmet goal on anything other than the physical environment of our streets. We can't throw our hands up in defeat when we've only just started because we've designed for the humans we want, and not the humans we have.

The necessary changes have only just begun and will, unfortunately, take decades to implement at the current pace. I realize that the engineering department takes a lot of heat from all sides as they work to make our streets safer, but saying that engineering is only one part of making our roads safer is like saying that water is but one part of the ocean. Engineering creates the environment in which all the other "E"s exist. As I have previously mentioned, our *primary* challenge is that we've been using a highway design manual to design city streets for generations.

Our challenges go beyond the lagging indicator of crash statistics—these are symptoms of an unhealthy system. The environment we have created is one where the norm is that we should be able to move around town quickly, and any interruption of flow must be minimized. We want drivers to stay attentive, but then we focus on removing the very friction that encourages attention. The forgiving design paradigm has compensated for a lot of being human for all of us in cars. The behaviors we need to "fix" are the very ones that have been accommodated by the system. With humble reflection, we can admit that we all do them to some extent as drivers. The level of attention required to never "drive dangerously" is an unreasonable expectation given the ease with which driving is supposed to occur in this system. We blame these behaviors for crashes, but they are the fabric of how most of us behave behind the wheel. Everywhere. All the time. We don't appreciate the damage we can inflict. As drivers, we don't expect to have to pay attention to everything, only the things that really affect *our* well being. The preoccupation with factors of safety for drivers has transferred unacceptable levels of risk to humans outside of cars. I know it is hard to appreciate, but the more "stressful" our streets are to us as drivers, the more likely we will be present to what we are doing and pay attention, not because we choose to or it's the right thing to do, but because we have to. Counterintuitively, this will lead to lower speeds and safer streets.

- ❖ Engineering cannot stop a person from choosing to drive drunk or high, but it can create an environment where there are safe and viable options other than getting in a car.
- ❖ Engineering cannot keep someone from driving over 80mph on a street with a design speed of 35mph, but it might reflect on whether 35 mph is an appropriate design speed for streets where humans are present outside of cars.
- ❖ Engineering cannot force someone from blowing through an intersection with all the appropriate signs, markings, and signals in place, but perhaps it can consider that if that is the case, then perhaps the appropriate signs, markings and signals are insufficient.
- ❖ Vision Zero is all about changing the system, not treating it as gospel.



When an elderly woman with a cart won't cross Liberty at Stadium *with* the walk signal because the traffic is so aggressive; when folks can't easily get to the Kroger across Maple from the bus stop because the traffic is fast & heavy and the closest crosswalk is 300 feet away; and when people on foot are hit *in crosswalks* (the "safe" place for them to be); then there is something wrong with the system, *not the people using it*. To all of the above, the existing system says there is no solution that meets spec. There is no change to the engineering that could fix it. This is wrong. The system cannot be more important than the people it serves, and the people it serves are not all in cars.

I am grateful that we are certainly not without progress. I am glad to hear that the engineering team does indeed believe that infrastructure changes can change some outcomes and will adjust designs to improve the environment. I am concerned that the amount of change necessary is beyond the bounds of the existing system. Engineers can fix anything. Problem solving is their thing. I understand they also need to be rule followers, but as the Dalai Lama said, "Learn and obey the rules very well, so you will know how to break them properly." If there are norms, rules, or regulations that are getting in their way, then let us please clear them a path. If their mission is unclear, then let us clarify it.

Resorting to lobbying and public education campaigns, however, seems a poor use of limited resources. Far more useful would be more paint, posts, and bolt down speed tables. Even speed data collection would be more useful. If the only data we are studying is from police reports, then the data is old: an autopsy report instead of a physical. This is not how to point the city in the right direction to achieve Vision Zero.

Thank you, Seth Peterson