

The Six E's: Engineering (Commissioner Julie Boland)

Commissioner Boland met with Transportation Engineer Cyrus Naheedy on April 10, 2019, with the goal of beginning a dialogue to better understand the Engineering Component of the Six E's. We focused our conversation around Vision Zero and the role of Engineering in meeting Vision Zero goals. Two keys to Vision Zero are (1) Data-driven Engineering and (2) a Systems approach. Some possible action items and follow-up requests are listed below.

1. We need high quality, systems-level data to establish forward-looking priorities across the system (e.g., existing crosswalks and crosswalk lighting conditions, historic crash patterns, prevailing traffic speeds, predictive analysis). While Engineering has been using a data-driven approach to developing solutions for individual projects, adequate system-wide data is lacking.

Follow-up Request: An action plan should be developed to acquire the relevant data.

2. Data-gathering should be consistent with the Complete Streets approach. Some existing guidelines/regulations which consider only vehicular traffic (e.g., vehicle service level) are inconsistent with Complete Streets. We need to find solutions when local values conflict with state practices, either through legislation, negotiation, or returning segments of state-owned roads to local control (Kalamazoo did this recently).

Follow-up Request: Identify sources of conflict and best options for resolving.

3. Data-gathering should be as equitable and complete as possible. For example, relying solely on police reports of crashes under-reports the actual number of collisions and near misses, possibly in systematic ways.

Follow-up Request: Could an online reporting tool be helpful for acquiring more complete data? Do we know if this has worked well in other similar communities?

4. Revisit the suggestions of the Speed Reduction Task Force, as their recommendations are well-aligned with Vision Zero goals.

Follow-up Request: If there are obstacles to implementing each of the recommendations, what are those obstacles?