



**CITY OF SAN ANTONIO
OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL
COUNCIL CONSIDERATION REQUEST**

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2015 JUN 11 PM 2:55

TO: Mayor & City Council

FROM: Councilwoman Shirley Gonzales, District 5

COPIES TO: Sheryl Sculley, City Manager; Leticia Vacek, City Clerk; Edward Benavides, Chief of Staff; Christopher Callanen, Assistant to the City Council; Martha G. Sepeda, Acting City Attorney; John Peterek, Senior Management Analyst

SUBJECT: Creating a Vision Zero Action Plan

DATE: June 3, 2015

Issue Proposed for Consideration

I ask for your support for the inclusion of the following item on the agenda of the earliest available meeting of the Governance Committee:

- Acknowledge the role road design plays in causing traffic fatalities
- Set concrete goals and a timeline
- Incorporate existing road, pedestrian, and cyclist safety plans adopted by the city
- Tie-in to the City's Comprehensive Plan and Multimodal Transportation Plan
- Address land use and community design policies that impact transportation safety
- Consider the evolution of transportation technology and the implications this might have on future road safety and design.

Brief Background

Traffic fatalities and injuries are not inevitable. A single life lost is one life too many. Public safety is our first priority, and eliminating traffic fatalities and injuries should be our first transportation priority.

According to TXDoT, fatal or incapacitating traffic crashes cost San Antonians \$586.8 million in 2014. The cost of non-incapacitating crashes- which would also be alleviated by adopting a Vision Zero initiative-- was \$193 million. This equates to a total cost of \$779.8 million for 2014, which would have been equivalent to roughly 46% of the City's 2014 operating budget. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) estimated the societal cost of traffic crashes in San Antonio at \$1.1 billion per year. Traffic crashes are also the leading cause of congestion. Improving safety is an effective congestion mitigation strategy.

Beyond monetary costs, one cannot put a price on human life or the loss suffered by family and friends by traffic fatalities. Traffic fatalities disparately impact certain groups, including older citizens, children, low income residents, and people who walk and ride bikes. A geographic breakdown of fatalities shows the poorest districts in the city also experience the highest pedestrian fatality rates. NHTSA reports children 14 and younger account for 3% of traffic fatalities, but 21% of those children are killed while walking. People 65 and older are 14% of the U.S. population, but accounted for 17% of traffic fatalities, and 30% of those fatalities occurred while walking or riding bikes.

Vision Zero was an initiative started in Sweden in 1994. The vision first recognizes the inherent value of human life and establishes that no loss of life is acceptable. It is based on the simple fact that we are human and make mistakes. The road system needs to keep us moving, but it must also be designed to protect us at every turn. By acknowledging the inevitable mistakes human drivers will make, the focus becomes designing roads which compensate for these mistakes instead of adding to them or punishing them.


Since setting the Vision Zero Initiative into motion in 1997, Sweden has experienced a 42% reduction in traffic fatalities. Similarly, Switzerland has seen a 41% drop, Germany a 45% drop, France a 48% drop, and Spain a 53% decline in fatalities. Similar results in San Antonio would equate to nearly \$300 million in total annual savings.

In 2014, New York and San Francisco became the first major US cities to adopt a Vision Zero Initiative, and they are seeing results. One year into Vision Zero, New York reduced traffic fatalities by 26%, the fewest since 1910. U.S. Department of Transportation established a strategic goal to eliminate deaths across all modes of transportation. The National Highway Administration's Toward Zero Deaths program intends to eliminate fatalities on highways. Cities including Chicago, Boston, Los Angeles, Austin, Portland, Seattle, and San Jose have committed to Vision Zero plans and policies. Traffic safety records at Joint Base San Antonio demonstrate Vision Zero is achievable in San Antonio.

San Antonio must make the same commitment to public safety and preserving life. It should not be 41.4% more deadly to drive, walk or cycle in San Antonio than it is in Austin (using 2013 fatal crashes per 100,000 population) or 400 percent more dangerous than New York.



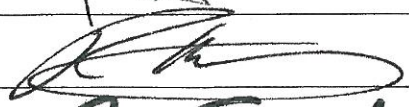

Zero traffic fatalities and injuries is achievable. San Antonio needs a plan which addresses its unique transportation challenges. It will be necessary for the city to take into account these elements and craft a plan specific to San Antonio. The city cannot accept a single traffic fatality, and must take action.

Submitted for Council consideration
by:


Councilwoman Shirley Gonzales, District 5

Supporting Councilmembers' Signatures (4 only)

District No.

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