

POLICY STATEMENT



ASSOCIATION OF PEDESTRIAN
& BICYCLE PROFESSIONALS

Expertise for Active Transportation



POLICY STATEMENT: VISION ZERO

Revised December 2021

Overview of APBP Policy Statements

The Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals (APBP) supports the community of professionals working to create more walkable, bikeable places through facilitating the exchange of professional and technical knowledge and by promoting fundamental positions that are broadly acknowledged and acted upon by APBP members.

APBP Policy Principles:

1. APBP represents the professional expertise and practical experience of its members in transportation policy discussions to advance active and healthy communities.
2. APBP endorses active transportation as an integral part of transportation systems through all stages of planning, design, funding, and implementation.
3. APBP supports connected, convenient, and safe streets and pathways in every community and planning with the input of every member of a community.
4. APBP advances street designs that make walking and bicycling a viable option for everyone in every place.

Position:

APBP believes traffic-related fatalities and serious injuries are preventable and should not be tolerated.

APBP supports the Vision Zero approach to eliminate traffic fatalities and serious injuries through a systematic focus on engineering solutions supported by innovative and proactive policies, data analysis, equitable enforcement and engagement programs. It's important to use good judgement to measure new tactics and not rely on strategies which have been before but produce substandard safety results.

APBP endorses the work of the Vision Zero Network and commends cities that have joined the network. These early-adopter cities are helping build political will to improve safety for all users of public rights-of-way. APBP encourages jurisdictions to adopt Vision Zero Policies and Action Plans.

Definition:

Vision Zero imagines a future without traffic fatalities and severe injuries.

To get there, Vision Zero uses a multi-disciplinary strategy built on a “Safe System” approach to traffic safety. Safe System planning is systems-based, holistic, and built on discrete elements: acknowledging serious and fatal crashes are preventable; addressing high-risk locations proactively and systematically; sharing responsibility for traffic risks between system users and designers; and combining different elements to produce a safer roadway system.

Vision Zero differs from the traditional approach to traffic safety planning and roadway planning and design.

- Vision Zero argues traffic fatalities and serious injuries are *preventable* if attention and resources are committed to prioritizing safety in the transportation system;
- Vision Zero efforts are focused on minimizing the *human toll* of crashes, with less emphasis on property-damage-only crashes, largely by addressing speeding traffic and implementing known safety measures to reduce the likelihood and severity of crashes; and
- Vision Zero accepts that individual road users *will make mistakes* and emphasizes the responsibility of policymakers, road designers, law enforcement and other private and public actors to create a system to minimize crashes and their impacts.¹

Vision Zero strategies are multimodal and consistent with “Complete Streets” principles to design roadways to serve all users and modes. Vision Zero policies put a specific focus on preventing fatalities and severe injuries for the most vulnerable roadway users: people walking and biking, as well as children, seniors, and low-income and minority populations, who are injured and killed in traffic at higher rates than the average road user.²

Application:

Though first implemented country-wide in Sweden in the 1990s, Vision Zero Policies and Action Plans have been adopted in many cities in the United States and Canada. Regional entities are increasingly considering them.

Successful implementation of a Vision Zero Policy begins with the analysis of injury crash data, creation of an Action Plan that lays out actionable strategies, timelines, and priorities, meaningful community engagement, and an emphasis on equity, and includes tools for regularly and transparently measuring and assessing progress.

Vision Zero Action Plans set a clear timeline for achieving zero traffic deaths and serious injuries, build political and community commitment, and bring together diverse stakeholders to ensure a basic right of safety for all people as they move about their communities.

A Vision Zero Action Plan should be a living document and include actionable strategies, such as: prioritizing roadway design and investing in safety treatments, particularly in high injury areas and communities that have

¹ Too often, traffic safety campaigns assume people who walk and bike can be made safer through educational fliers, helmet giveaways and reflective vests. However, safety improves most when roads are designed to reduce speeds and when conflict points are removed, such as by eliminating right turns when the light is red.

² http://www.pedbikeinfo.org/data/factsheet_crash.cfm (includes links to various reporting agencies)

historically been under-served; managing travel speeds by lowering speed limits, using automated speed enforcement, and modifying street design to deter speeding; employing equitable and data-driven enforcement strategies that focus on the most dangerous driving behaviors; and evaluating and reporting on progress toward achieving established goals.

Safe streets, sidewalks and bikeways are vital to communities and increase healthy and equitable mobility for all and Vision Zero strategies have been proven to reduce severe injury traffic crashes.

Some jurisdictions use the “Toward Zero Deaths” framework, which often puts more emphasis on safety culture, and less emphasis on the responsibilities of the road designers.³

In 2016, the National Safety Council formed the Road to Zero Coalition, an umbrella organization including Vision Zero and Toward Zero Deaths leaders. Road to Zero aims to eliminate traffic deaths by 2050, and includes a significant focus on vehicle safety technology.⁴

Recommendations:

APBP recommends jurisdictions adopt Vision Zero Policies and build Vision Zero Action Plans by:

- Creating a Vision Zero Task Force that includes diverse representatives, including from public health, transportation agencies, policy makers, law enforcement, and community members.
- Gathering and analyzing injury crash data to help inform the priorities identified in the Action Plan.
- Conducting meaningful community engagement and gathering input from a broad and diverse array of community members, including communities of concern, seniors, people with disabilities, and children.
- Establishing specific and measurable goals and identifying who is responsible for achieving each goal and in what timeframe.
- Emphasizing equity by prioritizing efforts in underserved communities and communities of concern and use data to evaluate whether enforcement is equitable.

For jurisdictions not yet ready to adopt Vision Zero policies, APBP suggests improving pedestrian and bicyclist safety by⁵:

- Taking a Complete Streets and Safe System approach to roadway design and traffic safety.
- Prioritizing safety over speed whenever planning or designing roadway projects.
- Identifying and addressing barriers to safe streets for people of all ages and abilities.
- Using designs that are appropriate to the context of the street and its uses, incorporating proven safety countermeasures, and balancing high-cost hotspot interventions with low-cost systemic improvements.
- Developing a process to reduce speed limits and reduce speeds on city and residential streets to 25 miles per hour or less.

³ <https://www.towardzerodeaths.org/>

⁴ <https://www.nsc.org/road-safety/get-involved/road-to-zero>

⁵ Mayors’ Challenge Activities <https://www.transportation.gov/mayors-challenge>

- Lowering speeds on arterial roadways and/or designing them as complete streets that provide separate walkways and bikeways, emphasizing convenient crossings, and supporting public transit.
- Gathering and using data effectively, including number of trips taken, presence and distribution of high-risk roadway factors, occurrence of near-miss occasions, and the general risk for individuals using each mode of travel in the right of way.
- Taking advantage of opportunities to create, complete, and maintain pedestrian and bicycle priority networks.
- Improving safety laws and regulations for people walking and biking.
- Coordinating transportation planning and projects with other City departments, including public health and law enforcement.
- Educating and enforcing proper road use behavior.
- Vision Zero safety policies and programs should be regularly reviewed to ensure that the policies, programs, and projects do not have inequitable consequences.

APBP has featured Vision Zero strategies through our monthly educational webinars, including [Seattle's 2015 Vision Zero Action Plan](#), as replicable best practices that can be adapted to local conditions and needs in other communities.⁶

APBP also supports recommendations developed by industry experts, including the Vision Zero Network's "Nine Essential Components of a Strong Vision Zero Commitment,"⁷ "Guidelines for an Effective Vision Zero Action Plan,"⁸ "Moving from Vision to Action,"⁹ and "Vision Zero: Core Elements."¹⁰

Resources:

APBP's past webinars on Vision Zero are recorded and available on our association's website¹¹. Many APBP members, especially those in cities that belong to the Vision Zero Network, are involved in helping their cities effectively plan and implement effective Vision Zero programs and can serve as good local resources.

- Vision Zero Network: <http://visionzeronetwork.org>
- Road to Zero Coalition: The coalition includes U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Federal Highway Administration, and Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration and the National Safety Council. [Road to Zero - National Safety Council \(nsc.org\)](#)
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- Vision Zero Cities: [Vision Zero Communities | Vision Zero Network](#)

⁶ <https://login.filesanywhere.com/fs/v.aspx?v=8c696487616374b4a3ab>

⁷ Vision Zero Network Nine Essential Components of a Strong Vision Zero Commitment: <https://visionzeronetwork.org/9-components-of-a-strong-vision-zero-commitment/>

⁸ Vision Zero Network Guidelines for an Effective Vision Zero Action Plan: <https://visionzeronetwork.org/roadmapforaction/>

⁹ http://visionzeronetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/MinimumElements_Final.pdf

¹⁰ <https://visionzeronetwork.org/resources/vision-zero-core-elements/>

¹¹ APBP webinars on Vision Zero can be accessed on APBP's website <https://login.filesanywhere.com/fs/v.aspx?v=8c696487616374b4a3ab>

- Toward Zero Deaths: <http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/tzd/>
 - Global Road Safety Partnership: [Welcome to GRSP - GRSP | Global Road Safety Partnership \(grsproadsafety.org\)](http://grsproadsafety.org)
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APBP's policy statement development process/member participation

The Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals (APBP) relied on widely available information and tools to draft its policy statement on Vision Zero and also sought input from the Vision Zero Network. APBP specifically thanks Vision Zero Network founder and Executive Director Leah Shahum for her assistance in the development of this original statement.

APBP sought comments on a draft policy statement from its Policy Committee members. APBP's Board of Directors approved the initial version of this policy statement on July 17, 2018, a revision on September 19, 2019, and this most recent revision on December 1, 2021. APBP members can suggest changes to any policy statement by contacting the association's executive director, policy committee chair, or board member. For more information, contact: Melanie Bowzer, Executive Director, at mbowzer@amrms.com.
