

City of Cambridge

Richard C. Rossi • City Manager



Executive Department

Lisa C. Peterson • Deputy City Manager

March 21, 2016

To the Honorable, the City Council:

For many years, the City of Cambridge has been committed to improving safety for all users of the transportation system, particularly those users who are most vulnerable. As part of this commitment, we have undertaken a wide range of engineering, education, and enforcement efforts aimed at reducing crashes, increasing respect amongst users, and generally creating a safer and more equitable transportation network that meets the needs of users of all ages and all abilities. As a result of these efforts, we have seen an ongoing decrease in crash rates, as well as a reduction in the number of fatalities and serious injuries. Nonetheless, even one fatality or serious injury is more than we want to see, and we are continually seeking out ways to further reduce these types of incidents, and the pain and suffering they cause to individuals and our community at large.

In recent years, a number of communities—first in Europe and now increasingly in the United States—have begun to commit to Vision Zero, which sets a goal of eliminating transportation fatalities and serious injuries. Vision Zero is both an aspirational goal and a real goal, and we believe that in a community like Cambridge, it is in fact feasible to attempt to eliminate these types of serious incidents, through the types of engineering, education, and enforcement efforts we are already undertaking, with a particular focus on the safety of our system. Vision Zero provides a very helpful perspective on how we improve transportation safety and the actions that we need to take to make the goal a reality.

Through the national Vision Zero Network (www.visionzeronetwork.org), many communities have already committed to Vision Zero and have developed action plans that detail how they plan to achieve the elimination of transportation fatalities and serious injuries (see the attached map for communities that have committed to Vision Zero or are considering doing so). The goals and approach associated with Vision Zero are broadly consistent with our existing approach to transportation planning, design, and operations, including the following policies, plans, and programs:

- The Vehicle Trip Reduction Ordinance
- The Climate Protection Plan
- The Pedestrian Plan
- The Bicycle Plan
- The Transit Strategic Plan
- The Five-Year Street and Sidewalk Reconstruction Plan
- The Community Health Improvement Plan
- The Safe Routes to School Program
- The CitySmart Program

Based on the policies and plans, we do not expect that committing to Vision Zero will require significant new expenditures. Rather, it will create an enhanced focus on safety as we look at transportation problems and solutions through the lens of public health and harm reduction. In recent years, we have done extensive analysis of crash statistics in Cambridge, which has given much improved data about safety issues and locations where improvements are needed. This data will form the basis of our Vision Zero efforts, allowing us to take a data-driven approach to achieving the Vision Zero goal.

As City Manager, I am prepared to commit to Vision Zero, as are all of the key City Departments involved in transportation, including Community Development, Police, Public Health, Public Works, and Traffic, Parking, and Transportation. I ask that the City Council will join us in this commitment by approving the attached resolution and demonstrating that the City of Cambridge is fully committed to eliminating transportation fatalities and serious injuries.

Map of Vision Zero Communities



Very truly yours,

Richard C. Rossi

Richard C. Rossi
City Manager

RCR/mec
Attachment(s)

IN CITY COUNCIL
March 21, 2016

WHEREAS: The City of Cambridge has for many years been seeking to enhance safety for all users of our public streets, including people who drive, walk, bicycle, and use public transportation, and

WHEREAS: The City of Cambridge has for many years promoted the use of sustainable modes of transportation, including walking, cycling, and public transportation, and more recently established a formal Safe Routes to School Program; and

WHEREAS: A number of communities across the United States and around the world have begun to adopt a Vision Zero goal, which involves working towards the elimination of transportation fatalities and severe injuries; and

WHEREAS: These communities have come together under the banner of the Vision Zero Network (visionzeronetwork.org), which promotes Vision Zero nationally and helps to create information sharing among peer communities; and

WHEREAS: Vision Zero involves focusing on improving transportation safety from a public health and harm reduction perspective, an approach that is broadly consistent with the City’s transportation, public health, and community sustainability goals; and

WHEREAS: Committing to Vision Zero will reinforce existing sustainable transportation policies and plans, including the Vehicle Trip Reduction Ordinance, the Climate Protection Plan, the Pedestrian Plan, the Bicycle Plan, the Transit Strategic Plan, the Five-Year Street and Sidewalk Reconstruction Plan, and the City’s Community Health Improvement Plan; and

WHEREAS: The key City departments involved in transportation are supportive of a Vision Zero goal, including Community Development, Police, Public Health, Public Works, and Traffic, Parking, and Transportation; and

WHEREAS: These department have jointly performed a detailed analysis of crash statistics to understand the crash rates and safety issues in Cambridge, to provide a data-driven basis for understanding how safety can be improvement, now therefore be it

RESOLVED: That the City of Cambridge goes on record as committing to Vision Zero, with goals of eliminating transportation fatalities and serious injuries, as well as continuing to reduce the crash rates for all modes; and

RESOLVED: That the key City departments noted above will develop an initial Vision Zero Action Plan, which will be updated bi-annually (every two years); and

Attachment: Vision Zero Order (CMA 2016 #68 : Vision Zero)

RESOLVED: That the key City departments noted above will continue to develop yearly updates to the crash statistics and safety analysis, which will provide a basis for developing updates to the Action Plan and generally pursue actions aimed at achieving the goals of Vision Zero.