



Vision Zero Meeting – May 16, 2022

Attendance

1. VZ Steering Committee
 - a) Charles Lomax, City Community Empowerment
 - b) LaKenya Middlebrook, City Community Safety
 - c) Harold Cannon, City Engineering
 - d) Lt. Tammy DeBow, KPD Traffic Services
 - e) Bryan Hill, Bike Walk Knoxville
 - f) Carly Pearson, Knox County ADA and Catalyst Consulting
 - g) Amber Ford, Knox County Health Department
 - h) Ellen Zavisca, Knoxville-Knox County Planning (alternate)
 - i) Christie Brown, TDOT (alternate)
 - j) Chris Cherry, UTK
 - k) Cpl. Ron Humble, UTK Police
 - l) Moira Bindner, UTK Parking & Transit (alternate)
2. Facilitators
 - a) Brian Blackmon, City Sustainability
 - b) Dawn Michelle Foster, City Sustainability
 - c) Grace Levin, City Sustainability

1) Welcome (Brian Blackmon)

- a) Process overview
 - i. Transportation safety has long history
 - ii. Kicked off process in February; spent following months on stakeholder interviews / survey feedback as well as better understanding VZ
 - iii. This meeting is first of many public education & engagement opportunities
 - iv. Will kickstart community campaigns around July
- b) About VZ
 - i. Basic premise: all fatalities or serious injuries from crashes are unacceptable, and we need to advance safer transportation for all forms of use
- c) Timeline
 - i. February kickoff
 - ii. May panel – today's meeting
 - iii. Stakeholder interviews ongoing – reach out to Sustainability team to schedule
 - iv. June – public meeting to debrief findings to Steering Committee
 - v. Fall (Aug-Oct) - public info sessions & feedback opportunities
- d) Panelist bios

2) Panel presentations

- a) **Vision Zero overview (Bryan Hill, VZ chair of Bike Walk Knoxville)**
 - i. Intro
 1. Bike Walk vision for Knoxville - safe, vibrant community where people feel comfortable moving around without risking their lives
 2. VZ is international grassroots campaign to eliminate roadway deaths/injuries
 3. VZ is collaborative – brings together all users of roadway
 4. Helped Anchorage AK develop their VZ plan, has been working on Knoxville VZ for 5 years – several 2020 mayoral candidates committed to platform, helped craft 2020 resolution

5. Personal interest – crash survivor
- ii. The challenge
 1. State: >1000 roadway deaths annually
 2. Knoxville: >100 injuries or deaths annually, inc 30 bike/ped
 3. Children/elderly are more vulnerable
 4. Bike/pedestrian users are involved in 2% of collisions, but 21% of deaths
- iii. The vision: VZ principles
 1. All deaths / serious injuries are unacceptable
 2. Humans are vulnerable
 3. Humans make mistakes
 4. Responsibility is shared
 5. Safety should be proactive
 6. Redundancy is critical
- iv. VZ is data-based goal: getting to 0 is measurable
- v. VZ campaigns have worked in other communities (New York, San Francisco, Boston) – traffic fatalities decreased 30-40% (average -32% in first 5 years) – unprecedented success
- vi. 50 VZ communities in US – across geography, culture, etc
- vii. Success in mid-sized cities (Durham NC, Ft Lauderdale FL, Columbia MO, Anchorage AK) – developing stronger partnerships, implementing low-cost measures, reducing speed & crashes, improving infrastructure safety, and receiving positive public feedback
- viii. Call for action – 4 steps
 1. Political commitment (resolution in October 2020)
 2. Steering Committee (formed, many here today – should be diverse and representative of community to protect the most vulnerable)
 3. Action Plan (data-driven road map; including both low-cost and long-term solutions)
 4. Implementation (equity embedded, address high-priority areas first)
- ix. Developing Action Plan
 1. Where are we now? Robust data
 2. Where do we want to go? Goals/timeline
 3. How do we get there? Accountability – who is responsible and what resources are needed
 4. How do we measure success? Transparency
- x. Short-term actions
 1. Leading intersection intervals - allow bike/ped users to enter intersections before vehicles to increase visibility
 2. Temporary furniture on streets
 3. Flexible posts / paint on streets
- xi. Long-term actions
 1. Complete streets (City already has policy)
 2. Decreasing turning radiuses with permanent infrastructure
 3. Widen sidewalks
 4. Mid-block crossings for pedestrians
- xii. Overall goal: safe systems approach (looks at users, vehicles using them, speed limits, road design, crash response) – not just responsibility of road users to maintain safety, but responsibility is shared by all. Look at areas that are high-risk in addition to areas with historic crash patterns.
- xiii. VZ is paradigm shift towards culture of safety – not a slogan, tagline, or program

b) Local crash data & equity (Ellen Zavisca, principal transportation planner at City-County Planning & TPO)

- i. Trends
 1. 2021 had highest # of traffic deaths in 19 years (53 deaths) AND highest % of crashes resulting in a death (44 deaths per 10,000 crashes)

2. We KNOW where crashes are happening - most crashes occur on just a few corridors in Knox County (most in Knoxville - including major arterials AND DOT state routes)
 - a. 5 corridors have highest number of fatal/serious-injury crashes per mile:
 - i. Chapman Highway / Henley St / Broadway
 - ii. Clinton Highway
 - iii. Western Ave
 - iv. Magnolia Ave
 - v. Kingston Pike
 - b. 6 corridors have 89% of crashes involving bike/ped users:
 - i. Broadway
 - ii. Chapman Highway
 - iii. Cumberland Ave
 - iv. Kingston Pike
 - v. Magnolia Ave
 - vi. Western Ave
 - c. Solutions aren't simple, but we have the data to inform decisions & set priorities
- ii. Equity disparities
 1. Age: seniors more likely to be killed as pedestrians in crashes; risk increases with age
 - a. Knoxville: People over 65 make up 13% of population, 8% of pedestrians hit by cars, but 16% of pedestrians killed or seriously injured
 2. Race: BIPOC (esp Black/indigenous) also more likely to be killed in traffic crashes (likely due to greater exposure due to poverty)
 - a. Knoxville: Black people make up 18% of population but 23% of pedestrians hit by cars
 3. Exposure / access to vehicles: 10% of Knoxville households (9,000 households) don't have car – doesn't include households with users who CAN drive but don't have access to a car (more drivers than vehicles, people with suspended licenses, etc) – all must rely on alternative transportation
 4. Vehicle cost: AAA estimates that average vehicle costs > \$9,000/year. Many households don't feel they have another option. National vehicle loan debt has doubled in last 10 years – \$1.42t in 2021; almost equivalent to student loan debt and double credit card debt.
 5. Seniors: AARP estimates average person outlives their ability to drive by 10 years – those households rely on alternative transportation. Increased risk when people feel they don't have safe, dignified way to get around town.
- iii. Traffic violence is not just data points – human lives, families, community impact
- iv. Committee meets 2x/year to review traffic fatalities in Knox County – factors & solutions
 1. Cross-agency participation: law enforcement, engineering, public health
 2. Substance abuse involved in 50-60% of traffic fatalities in Knox Co – these issues are complicated, holistic, and go beyond traditional transportation design expertise

c) Road design (Harold Cannon, director of City Engineering)

- i. Commitment to public safety
 1. Historic Engineer's creed = commitment to public health/safety/welfare
 2. In last decade, ASCE added 'create safe, resilient, sustainable infrastructure; foster equitable participation; consider current and anticipated needs'
 3. Values collaboration
- ii. City Engineering design guidelines
 1. Highlight 'Green Book' (2018 AASHTO Geometric Design of Highways and Streets)
 - a. Most recent edition was rejected by TN DOT Deputy Commissioner because it didn't address multimodal design
 - b. Not everyone can afford a car – we need to protect bike/ped users
 - c. "No one should die because of a mistake"

- d. Shows evolution of Engineering field to prioritize safety of non-vehicle users
- iii. Examples of engineering safety improvements
 - 1. Roundabouts (reduce points of conflict/crashes)
 - 2. Lower speed limits (reduce crash severity)
 - a. This year, City moved to make speed limits more flexible and location-based, rather than flat city-wide ordinance
 - b. Majority of high-volume streets already have speed limit signs – previous ordinance set speed limit to 25 mpg on un-signed streets, but now Engineering has authority to set limits lower
 - 3. Traffic calming (reduce traffic speeds / volume)
 - a. Office of Neighborhoods manages neighborhood calming program – budget has increased significantly due to support of elected leadership
 - b. 193 speed humps & 18 curb island devices (such as chokers, medians, traffic circles) installed since 2018; another 180 planned before December 2022
 - c. Average 17% speed reduction & 13% volume reduction
 - 4. Rumble streeps (reduce head-on crashes)
 - 5. Road diets (repurpose the right-of-way to accommodate all road users)
 - 6. Median barriers (reduce angle crashes)
- iv. Modern safety analysis
 - 1. Historically, engineering field just considered vehicle crashes in design/evaluation – now considering non-vehicle road users
- v. Quick-build pedestrian projects
 - 1. Examples:
 - a. Install crosswalks / curb ramps
 - b. Add flashing beacons at crosswalks
 - c. Adjust traffic signal timing to give leading interval to pedestrians
 - d. Build ‘pedestrian refuge’ spots mid-crosswalk (flex posts, modular design, etc)
 - e. Add audible push button / voice detection to pedestrian crossings
 - 2. Road infrastructure is old – many sidewalks and roads were built before modern design expectations
 - a. Priority for City leaders, but it would take \$1.5-2b to do all projects in sidewalk study – must prioritize
 - 3. Prioritizing school zones
- vi. Quick-build bicycle projects
 - 1. Examples:
 - a. Install bike lanes on wide roads
 - b. Reconfigure lanes (road diet)
 - c. Enhance bike lanes (vertical protection, green conflict marking, painted buffers)
- vii. Long-term construction projects
 - 1. Take much more to achieve: requires modifying the roadway, requires design & construction often >\$1m, requires years to complete
 - 2. Engineering meeting with TPO to look at geographic areas with crashes between vehicles/bikes/peds to identify priority areas & begin long-term construction planning
 - 3. Expensive. TIP funding is frozen due to industry increase in construction costs.
- viii. Active safety improvement projects
 - 1. Long list – highlights Capital Improvement Plan, which will be discussed by Council tomorrow night
- ix. Excited to see 30-40% reduction in other communities – but wants Knoxville to strive for 50% to start

d) Law enforcement (Lt. Tammy DeBow, Knoxville Police Department)

- i. KPD has 4 teams of crash reconstructionists – collect as much data as possible to understand causes of crashes

- ii. KPD understaffed – can't do enforcement (like DUI stops or traffic calming) when they're running from one crisis to another. Reactive, not proactive
- iii. KPD has several funded programs and lots of ideas for programs, but no capacity to implement
- iv. Participates in TPO's crash review team, along with City engineering, community members, TN Highway Safety Office
- v. Enforcement data shows fatalities by vehicle type, change over time
- vi. Role of substance use
 - 1. Many crashes involve drivers under the influence.
 - 2. KPD has DUI grant and specialized officers, but a DUI traffic stop takes an officer out of service for 4 hours
- vii. Traffic calming is a voluntary 'second job' for KPD officers – residents share concerns, KPD adds to list and sends to district commanders, and officers address as time allows
- viii. DUI collisions
 - 1. Crime analysis team use database to find roadway segments with high numbers of crashes, work with traffic engineering and TPO to analyze/improve
- ix. Programs
 - 1. New funding for DUI trailer – hope to partner with THP to do DUI checkpoints
 - a. Also did distracted driving initiative with THP
 - b. Distracted driving: hard to prove driver has been using phone without consent; phone activity usually reviewed in fatal crashes
 - c. Distracted driving causes almost as many crashes as DUI
 - 2. DUI enforcement
 - 3. Traffic calming programs
- x. Biggest challenge: driver behavior & buy-in. Need parents and schools to educate/enforce young drivers (# passengers, etc). KPD offers TRACK driver's education. Seniors driving beyond their ability is a problem.
- xi. KPD committed – want to make Knoxville a better place to drive, bike, walk, run

3) Audience Q&A

- a) Jay Price, citizen: can infrastructure construction costs be passed onto developers for sidewalks, etc?
 - i. Harold: already there. developers are required to develop sidewalks & roadway section. But standard roadway is 26' - wide – but working with Planning Commission to determine what width makes sense. 'One size fits all' doesn't work – must tailor infrastructure to use.
- b) [Unknown]: what City policies will change to support VZ (ie removing parking minimums to reduce car dependency)?
 - i. Harold: policies are changing. ReCode process made a lot of changes. Communities eliminating downtown parking are finding it's problematic – but historic formulas create too many parking spots. Already thinking holistically: for example, a neighborhood asked to significantly increase parking – Engineering, Economic Development, & TPO decided it would not make sense. Education required to move community towards alternative transportation – need to show that public transit and alternatives to personal vehicles are desirable. Wide range of need across the City - anticipating more flexibility with parking standards to address specific use cases.
 - ii. Ellen: Parking standards were tightened up with ReCode – new parking maximums implemented. Need to look at where parking is located (ie don't make a bus rider cross a huge parking lot to get to a store – inconvenient, dangerous, and increases perceived need to drive themselves). Parking lots are really dangerous for pedestrians – how do we design lots for compactness, accessibility, AND safety?
 - iii. Harold: Example of promising new approach - new stadium. Planning required developer to do study of surrounding parking before adding new spots, AND app will point visitors to existing parking. In the past, new development would dictate that # stadium seats = # new parking spots. This approach lets us work with the assets/infrastructure we already have.
- c) Moira Bindner, UT Parking: UT doesn't have enough parking on- and off-campus, especially in Ft Sanders where development is dense and residents outnumber spaces. Increasing out-of-state students, who are

more likely to bring cars. KAT facing similar problem - trying to strategically balance geographic coverage vs ridership. Changing vehicle-centric transportation attitudes is hard, and hard to educate campus users about safe road use. How can UT improve conversation with developers & education to students?

- i. Brian: public meetings this fall would be great opportunity to get involve
 - ii. Harold: UT undergoing master planning that looks at broader geographic area beyond campus – across river, Fort Sanders, downtown. City leaders and UT already collaborating to tie together student populations in surrounding areas. But no solution to parking yet. Looking at Sutherland Ave & Tyson-Fort Sanders corridors, especially for bike/ped users. Need to bring together UT master planning process & City's VZ process.
- d) Online user: Are micro mobility options like e-scooters included in Vision Zero? How can we keep those users safer?
- i. Brian: VZ approach considers all users, so public outreach will include collaboration with scooter vendors to make sure information is pushed out through scooter apps. City has made policy decisions to group scooters with bike/ped to provide safety enhancements for all non-vehicle users.

4) Close

- a) Meeting survey
- b) Next meeting June 20 – Steering Committee meeting