

Adopted June 2020

Updated April 2024

Taking Action on

regional vision



SAFER STREETS FOR METRO DENVER



Executive summary

If you have difficulty using this document's content, please email access@drcog.org or call 303-455-1000. Please expect a response within 72 hours (three business days).

Executive summary

In June 2020, the Denver Regional Council of Governments adopted a Vision Zero commitment to eliminate traffic-related fatalities and severe injuries on the region's roadways and make safety a priority for all transportation system users. Taking Action on Regional Vision Zero includes a toolkit for local governments to use when planning a Vision Zero strategy in their communities.

Local, regional, and state stakeholders collaborated robustly through the Regional Vision Zero Working Group and engaged with the public to guide the plan, which included creating a crowd-sourced map of regional safety issues. It includes intensive data analyses of fatal and serious-injury crash statistics over a five-year period in the region. The plan sets out Action Initiatives, an implementation timeline and measures that will help track regional progress toward safety improvements.



What is Vision Zero?

Vision Zero is a transportation safety philosophy based on the core belief that loss of life or serious injury is not an acceptable price for mobility. Reaching zero fatalities requires implementing a Safe System approach, founded on the principles that humans make mistakes and that human bodies have limited ability to tolerate crash impacts.

The Safe System approach focuses on human mistakes and vulnerability and designs a system with many redundancies to protect everyone. Six principles that form the basis of the Safe System approach are deaths and serious injuries are unacceptable, humans make mistakes, humans are vulnerable, responsibility is shared, safety is proactive and redundancy is crucial.

Core elements

Complete Streets

The Safe System approach is to design Complete Streets that give people walking, rolling, bicycling and taking transit the same access to safe and comfortable streets as those driving a motor vehicle.

Context-appropriate speeds

As crash speed increases, the likelihood of a severe injury or fatality also increases, especially for people walking and biking. The Safe System approach is to design and operate roads to achieve context-appropriate vehicle speeds that protect all roadway users.

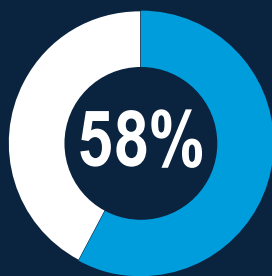
Equity

Disadvantaged communities are disproportionately affected by traffic safety issues. The Safe System approach prioritizes Complete Streets and roadway design and operation projects in disadvantaged communities and works to ensure that Vision Zero efforts improve – not exacerbate – negative, unintended consequences, particularly in communities of color and low-income communities.

Engaging the community for a people-first plan

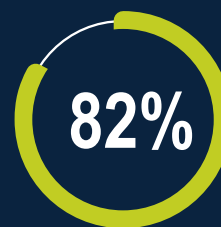
Engaging local communities, stakeholders and the public across the Denver region was critical to the plan's development. Continued engagement is necessary for successful plan implementation.

What was heard:



indicated that they know someone who has been hospitalized or killed as a result of a traffic crash.

Prioritizing safe travel of people over expeditious travel of motor vehicles is a core Vision Zero strategy:



of respondents were willing to add one or more minutes to their commute to improve safety.

The toolkit

Regional High-Injury Network

While there are more than 15,000 roadway miles in the Denver region, fatal and serious-injury crashes disproportionately occur on only 9% of these roads. Crash data from 2013 to 2017 was analyzed to identify the Regional High-Injury Network or the roads in the region where the majority of serious-injury and fatal crashes occur. The Regional High-Injury Network also identifies critical corridors, selected by isolating the Regional High-Injury Network by county and finding the highest-density corridors for serious-injury and fatal crashes.

Regional crash and behavior profiles and countermeasures

Given the variety of land use contexts, roadway networks, travel characteristics and the varying types of crashes in the Denver region, the region was divided into four area types: urban, suburban/compact communities, rural and limited-access highways. The regional crash profile analyses were divided into these four area types because travel purposes, mode shares and roadway designs vary greatly by area type. Potential countermeasures identified for each crash profile also consider the regional area type.

Regional Vision Zero objectives

Taking Action on Regional Vision Zero builds on the supporting objectives identified in Metro Vision and establishes a series of Regional Vision Zero objectives and action initiatives for addressing roadway safety and implementing Vision Zero in the region. To implement the plan, the following actions must be focused on:



1 Improve collaboration between allied agencies



2 Increase awareness and adoption of vision zero



3 Design and retrofit roadways to prioritize people's safety



4 Improve data collection and reporting



5 Increase funding and resources



6 Increase support for legislation, policies and practices that focus on safety at all levels

Regional Vision Zero implementation plan

To achieve these goals, the Implementation Plan identifies a series of immediate, short and medium- to long-term actions to move the region towards safer roads for everyone. These focused actions are informed by a review of existing policies and practices, input from community engagement and collaboration with the Regional Vision Zero Work Group. Progress is already being made on several of the recommended actions.

Accomplishments

Objective 3

Developed a Complete Street Toolkit for the DRCOG region, addressing safety-related aspects of street design, incorporating Vision Zero principles, crash profiles and countermeasures and further guidance for establishing safe design components.

Performed a prioritization analysis of the Complete Streets network of the region to identify the top corridors for investing funds and resources to improve mobility and accessibility for all users.

Objective 4

Created a story map data tool on the Regional Data Catalog to enhance the Regional Vision Zero toolkit and provide local governments easy access to quick analysis of area-type crash profiles.

Objective 6

Supported the Senate Bill 23-200 legislation that ultimately passed, which allows local agencies to use safety cameras as an enforcement technique, including red-light running and speeding.

Key immediate actions

Objective 1: Improve collaboration between allied agencies

- 1.2 Convene regular local safety meetings of state and local transportation and public health professionals, police and fire departments, and community and advocacy organizations, to collaboratively address dangerous behaviors on the roadways with strategies like culturally appropriate safety programs and educational messages, paired with outreach and investments.

Objective 2: Increase awareness and adoption of Vision Zero

- 2.1 Identify and promote Vision Zero training opportunities to local governments, including resources from the national Vision Zero Network, Federal Highway Administration and others.

Objective 3: Design and retrofit roadways to prioritize people's safety

- 3.1 Develop a Vision Zero Quick-Build Toolkit for member governments to provide guidance on the design and implementation of quick-to-deliver and adjustable traffic measures to improve safety on the Regional High-Injury Network and critical corridors.

Objective 4: Improve data collection and reporting

- 4.3 Perform a comprehensive crash data analysis to understand high-risk actions, pre-crash activities and demographics to further build out crash profiles.

Objective 5: Increase funding and resources

- 5.2 Continue evaluating Transportation Improvement Program criteria to further prioritize safety projects on the Regional High-Injury Network that address key crash profiles or otherwise reduce fatal and serious injury crashes.

Objective 6: Increase support for legislation, policies and practices that focus on safety at all levels

- 6.2 Support legislation to increase funding and evaluate reallocation of existing funding to safety projects to create a reliable, dedicated funding stream.