

POLICY STATEMENT



ASSOCIATION OF PEDESTRIAN
& BICYCLE PROFESSIONALS
Expertise for Active Transportation



POLICY STATEMENT: VISION ZERO

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:

The Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals (APBP) believes that traffic crashes are preventable and should not be tolerated. APBP supports “Vision Zero” strategies to eliminate traffic fatalities and injuries and other policies that emphasize actions to improve safety for people walking and biking. Fatal and severe crashes can be systematically eliminated through a focus on engineering solutions supported by education, outreach, and other programs.

APBP endorses the work of the Vision Zero Network and commends cities that have joined the network. These “early adopter” cities go far beyond simply adopting a Vision Zero policy; they are working to build political will to dramatically improve safety for all users of public rights-of-way. 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.¹

Definition:

“Vision Zero” is a multi-disciplinary strategy to eliminate all traffic fatalities and severe injuries. Safer streets are vital to communities and increase healthy and equitable mobility for all and Vision Zero strategies have been proven to reduce traffic crashes. Vision Zero campaigns set a clear timeline, build political and community commitment, and bring together stakeholders to ensure a basic right of safety for all people as they move about their communities.

Vision Zero strategies are built on a “Safe System” approach to traffic safety that is fundamentally different than traditional methods. Safe System planning is systems-based, holistic, and built on discrete elements: assuming that serious and fatal crashes are preventable; addressing high-risk locations proactively and systemically; sharing responsibility for traffic risks between system users and designers; and combining different safety elements to produce a safer roadway system. Embracing Safe Systems planning can change institutional approaches to roadway planning and design.

Vision Zero strategies are multi-modal and consistent with “Complete Street” principles that design roadways for all users. Vision Zero policies put a specific focus on preventing fatalities and injuries for the most vulnerable roadway users. People walking and biking, especially children, low-income, and minority populations, are killed at a disproportionately higher rate when compared to overall traffic fatalities.² Vision Zero and complete street designs put safety before speed and lives before property damage.

Vision Zero differs from the traditional approach to traffic safety planning:

- Vision Zero acknowledges that traffic fatalities and injuries are preventable if appropriate attention and resources are committed to prioritizing safety over speed;
- Vision Zero efforts are not expected to prevent crashes altogether, but rather are intended to minimize the severity of crashes, largely by lowering travel speeds and minimizing speed differentials between different road users; and
- Vision Zero acknowledges that people will make mistakes and emphasizes greater responsibility on policymakers, road designers and other collective action to minimize the negative impacts of crashes.³

¹ https://www.apbp.org/page/PBL_webinars?&hhsearchterms=%22dongho%22

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

³ Too often, “traffic safety” campaigns assume that people who walk and bike can be made safer through educational fliers, helmet giveaways and reflective vests. However, evidence shows safety improves when roads are designed to reduce speeds or when conflict points are removed, such as by eliminating right turns when the light is red.

Application:

Successful implementation of a Vision Zero policy begins with the creation of an Action Plan that lays out actionable strategies, timelines, and priorities, engages the community, emphasizes equity, and includes a tool for measuring and assessing progress.

A Vision Zero Action Plan should be a living document and include actionable strategies, such as: prioritizing roadway design and investing in safety treatments in high injury areas; managing travel speeds by lowering speed limits, instituting automated speed enforcement, and modifying street design to prevent speeding; employing equitable and data-driven enforcement strategies that focus on the most dangerous driving behaviors; evaluating and reporting on progress toward achieving established goals.

Recommendations:

APBP recommends jurisdictions take the following steps to support the success of a Vision Zero policy and Vision Zero Action Plan:

- Conduct community engagement and gather input from a broad and diverse array of community members, including communities of concern, seniors, people with disabilities, and children.
- Create a Vision Zero Task Force that includes representatives from law enforcement, public health, transportation agencies, and policy makers.
- Emphasize equity.⁴ Prioritize efforts in underserved communities and communities of concern and utilize data to evaluate whether enforcement is equitable.
- Gather and analyze crash data to help inform the priorities identified in the action plan.
- Establish specific and measurable goals and identify who is responsible for achieving the goal and in what timeframe.

For jurisdictions not yet ready to adopt an effective Vision Zero policy, APBP suggests beginning with actions and policies to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety, such as⁵:

- Take a Complete Streets and Safe Systems approach to roadway design and traffic safety.
- Prioritize safety over speed whenever planning or designing roadway projects.
- Identify and address barriers to safe streets for people of all ages and abilities.
- Use designs that are appropriate to the context of the street and its uses, incorporate proven safety countermeasures, and balance high-cost hotspot interventions with low-cost systemic improvements.
- Develop process to reduce speed limits and reduce speeds on non-arterial city and residential streets to 25 miles per hour or less.
- Lower speeds on arterial roadways and/or design them as complete streets that provide separate walkways and bikeways, emphasize convenient crossings, and support public transit.

⁴ Studies show that communities of concern are disproportionately impacted by traffic crashes.

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

- Gather and use 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.
- Take advantage of opportunities to create, complete, and maintain pedestrian and bicycle priority networks.
- Improve safety laws and regulations for people walking and biking.
- Coordinate transportation planning and projects with other City departments, including public health and law enforcement.
- Educate and enforce proper road use behavior.

APBP also supports recommendations developed by industry experts, including the Vision Zero Network’s “Nine Essential Components of a Strong Vision Zero Commitment”⁶ and “Guidelines for an Effective Vision Zero Action Plan”⁷.

Resources:

For further information about Vision Zero, APBP suggests these recognized sources:

- 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. <http://www.nsc.org/learn/NSC-Initiatives/Pages/The-Road-to-Zero.aspx>
- Vision Zero Network: <http://visionzeronetwork.org>
- Vision Zero Initiative: <http://www.visionzeroinitiative.com/>
- Vision Zero Cities: International Journal of Traffic Safety Innovation: <http://visionzerocities.org/>
- Toward Zero Deaths: <http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/tzd/>
- Global Road Safety Partnership: <http://www.grsproadsafety.org/our-knowledge/safer-road-users/vulnerable-road-users>
- Seattle Department of Transportation, Vision Zero materials: <http://www.seattle.gov/visionzero/the-plan>

APBP’s past webinars on Vision Zero are recorded and available on our association’s website⁸. 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.

⁶ Vision Zero Network Nine Essential Components of a Strong Vision Zero Commitment: <https://visionzeronetwork.org/9-components-of-a-strong-vision-zero-commitment/>

⁷ Vision Zero Network Guidelines for an Effective Vision Zero Action Plan: <https://visionzeronetwork.org/roadmapforaction/>

⁸ APBP webinars on Vision Zero can be accessed on APBP’s website <https://www.apbp.org/store/ListProducts.aspx?catid=81939&ftr=vision%20zero>

APBP's policy statement development process:

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 statement.

APBP sought comments on a draft policy statement from its Policy Committee members. APBP's Board of Directors approved the policy statement on July 17, 2018. 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.
