

REPORT

Engineering Services

To: Mayor Johnstone and Members of Council
Date: March 17, 2025

From: Lisa Leblanc
Director of Engineering Services
File: 01.1035.10
(Doc #2660711)

Subject: **Vision Zero Task Force**
Item #: 2025-90

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Terms of Reference for the Vision Zero Task Force, included as Attachment #2 to the staff report titled “Vision Zero Task Force” dated March 17, 2025 from the Director, Engineering Services, be endorsed.

PURPOSE

To provide an overview of Vision Zero, the Safe System Approach, and phases of forming a Vision Zero Task Force, and to provide a draft Letter of Invitation and draft Terms of Reference for the Vision Zero Task Force.

SUMMARY

Successful implementation of a Vision Zero campaign requires coordinated cooperation between various City departments and partner agencies and community organizations. An effective Vision Zero Task Force starts with setting clear goals and measurable targets, to avoid individuals focusing on their own priorities. A draft Letter of Invitation is provided in Attachment #1 and a draft Terms of Reference is provided in Attachment #2 to initiate the City of New Westminster’s Vision Zero Task Force.

BACKGROUND

At the December 2, 2024 Regular Council meeting, Council passed the following motion:

1. THAT Council strike a Vision Zero Task Force including but not limited to representatives from engineering staff, NWFR, NWPD, ICBC, Fraser Health, TransLink, School District No. 40, HUB Cycling, the Walkers Caucus, members of

the accessibility community, and youth to make recommendations to Council to achieve Vision Zero.

- 2. THAT Councillor Fontaine be appointed as Council liaison to the Vision Zero Task Force.

Many jurisdictions have adopted Vision Zero strategies or action plans to eliminate traffic fatalities and severe injuries on their streets. Vision Zero is a philosophy that road fatalities and serious injuries can and should be eliminated. These measures also increase safe, healthy, and equitable mobility for all. A Vision Zero strategy requires cooperation and coordination between levels of governments and partner agencies because it goes well beyond engineering and road design.

Vision Zero is the “what”, while the Safe System Approach is the “how”. The Safe System Approach is an integrated and comprehensive process to improve the safety performance of the transportation system that makes allowance for errors, and aims to eliminate predictable and preventable serious injuries and fatalities.



Figure 1: Vision Zero and the Safe System Approach, courtesy of the Transportation Association of Canada

The Principles of the Safe System Approach are:

- Deaths and serious injuries are unacceptable
- People make mistakes
- People are vulnerable
- Responsibility is shared
- Safety is proactive
- Overlapping measures are critical

Council's 2023-2026 Strategic Priorities Plan includes a focus on "Safe Movement of People" which identified the need for collaborative relationships across agencies to advance a Vision Zero mindset.

Traffic calming and management was identified in a recent survey of New Westminster residents as one area the City needs to demonstrate more progress.

Successful implementation of a Vision Zero campaign requires coordinated cooperation between various City departments and partner agencies and community organizations. To facilitate this coordination, some cities have assembled a Vision Zero Task Force.

Hoboken, New Jersey, is one such city. Hoboken is similar in population to and somewhat smaller in land area than New Westminster. Hoboken recently announced that they have had seven consecutive years without a traffic-related fatality.

DISCUSSION

An effective Vision Zero Task Force starts with setting clear goals and measurable targets, to avoid individuals focusing on their own priorities based on their own past experiences or expectations. A strong task force has a lifecycle with three distinct phases:

Phase 1: Develop a Governance Structure

The development of a governance structure includes establishing which organizations need to be part of the Task Force, a Terms of Reference, funding, and goals. It is critical that the task force helps develop and has real ownership—in a collective way—over clear actions, strategies, and targets—all of which are specific and measurable. The governance and funding structure establishes project leadership and stakeholders, and ensures well-staffed teams to carry out objectives.

Phase 2: Develop an Action Plan and Implement Objectives to Achieve the Goals

The Task Force strategically brings together key individuals to share data that reveal the existing conditions of preventable roadway injuries and deaths.

Data-sharing is the foundation of crafting the Vision Zero Action Plan and is often one of the most challenging obstacles. Although municipalities are responsible for designing their streets safely, and implementing safety improvements from a Vision Zero Action Plan, most British Columbian municipalities do not have access to the incident-based, time-based, location-based, and population-based factors to determine the nature of the crashes. Partners, particularly First Responders, hold much of this data, but British Columbian municipalities also rely on Health Authorities and ICBC to fill in gaps. The amalgamation of all these data sources, outlines the crash-incident story. Refer to Figure 2 for a sample crash story map.

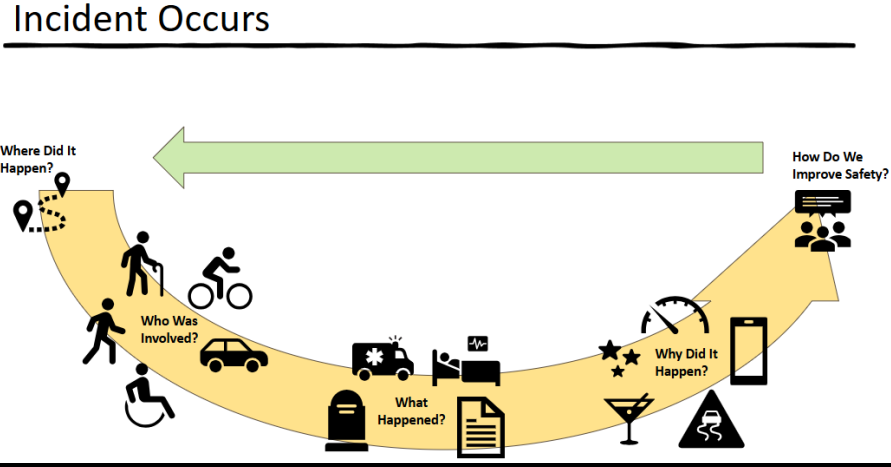


Figure 2: Transportation crash story map for data-driven safety improvements

With the amalgamation of data sources, the type of roadway changes needed to reduce injury severity and death in the future are identifiable. Using the crash-incident stories for various locations and for specific crash types within a municipality, a draft Vision Zero Action Plan can be assembled. The draft Vision Zero Action Plan is then shared with community agencies and the public to gather feedback on additional areas where people feel unsafe.

Phase 3: Learning and Evaluation Through Monitoring

A Task Force ensures transparent communication on the implementation of the Vision Zero Action Plan. This often includes annual progress reports. The Task Force establishes mechanisms for sustained commitment between partner agencies to realize the cultural, infrastructural, and policy changes needed to realize zero traffic-related deaths.

With this lifecycle in mind, the immediate priority is inviting to the Task Force those partner agencies that have quantitative data from which to draft a Vision Zero Action Plan. The partners who hold the various data sources to invite to the Task Force include New Westminster Police Department, New Westminster Fire & Rescue Services, ICBC, Fraser Health, TransLink, and the Ministry of Transportation & Transit (MoTT). These partners hold the information about the incident-based, time-based, location-based, and population-based factors that determine the nature of the crashes. The amalgamation of these data sources will identify the type of changes needed to reduce injury severity and death on New Westminster streets, which forms the basis of the draft Vision Zero Action Plan. Staff have had preliminary discussions with representatives of these organizations, with generally positive interest.

Once the Vision Zero Action Plan is drafted, key stakeholder groups would be invited to share their data and lived experiences to refine the plan. These key stakeholders include School District #40, HUB Cycling, Walkers' Caucus, members of the accessibility community, youth and New Westminster citizens.

NEXT STEPS

With this lifecycle in mind—develop a governance structure, develop an action plan, and learn and evaluate—staff are providing a draft letter of invitation (Attachment #1) that can be sent to partner agencies to begin the formation of a Vision Zero Task Force for New Westminster. A draft Terms of Reference for the Task Force is provided in Attachment #2.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Globally, more than half of all road traffic deaths occur among vulnerable road users, such as pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists, and two-thirds of road traffic fatalities occur among people of working age (World Health Organization). There is an economic burden that is often overlooked with the traditional approach to roadway design: ongoing health treatment costs for non-fatal injuries and loss of productivity with death or disability. Road crashes also take a significant toll at a societal level from the trauma experienced by First Responders to the victims and their families, and even those witnessing traffic violence.

Improving safety on our streets makes people feel more comfortable, regardless of their travel mode. Making investments in road safety is a long-term contribution to the health and wellbeing of New Westminster citizens and thus the City’s sustainability goals.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

At this time, the financial implications are hosting costs for the Task Force, which can be absorbed within the Engineering operating budget.

With the Community Advisory Assembly currently on pause for evaluation purposes, Legislative Services staff can support the Task Force with existing staff resources. Should Council determine the continuation of the Assembly, additional resources may be required to support the Task Force.

INTERDEPARTMENTAL LIAISON

This report has been shared with Legislative Services and Finance, who provided comments that have been incorporated. Legislative Services can support the Task Force with existing staff resources.

OPTIONS

The following options are presented for Council’s consideration:

1. THAT the Terms of Reference for the Vision Zero Task Force, included as Attachment #2 to the staff report titled “Vision Zero Task Force” dated March 17, 2025 from the Director, Engineering Services, be endorsed.

2. THAT Council provide other direction to staff.

Staff recommend Option #1.

CONCLUSION

Making investments in road safety is a long-term contribution to the health and wellbeing of New Westminster citizens and thus the City’s sustainability goals. The formation of a Vision Zero Task Force as per the draft Terms of Reference would be the first step towards convening the right agencies and amalgamating data to understand the nature of crashes and the changes needed to reduce injury severity and death on New Westminster streets. The Vision Zero Task Force would also provide the sustained commitment between partner agencies to realize the cultural, infrastructural, and policy changes needed to realize zero traffic-related deaths in New Westminster.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment #1 – Draft Letter of Invitation
Attachment #2 – Draft Terms of Reference

APPROVALS

This report was prepared by:
Lacey Hirtle, P.Eng., MASc, Transportation Engineer

This report was reviewed by:
Mike Anderson, P.Eng., MCIP, RPP, Manager, Transportation
Hanieh Berg, Corporate Officer

This report was approved by:
Lisa Leblanc, P.Eng., M.Sc., Director of Engineering and Deputy CAO
Lisa Spitale, MCIP, RPP, Chief Administrative Officer