

# CORE ELEMENTS

## FOR VISION ZERO COMMUNITIES

### INTRODUCTION

**Vision Zero – the strategy to eliminate traffic fatalities and severe injuries – is being adopted by a growing number of communities across North America and beyond. While safe mobility is not a new concept, Vision Zero requires a shift in how communities approach decisions, actions, and attitudes around safe mobility.**

A fundamental part of this shift is moving from a traditional approach to a Safe Systems approach toward traffic safety. A traditional approach accepts that a certain number of traffic deaths and severe injuries will occur as unavoidable consequences of mobility and focuses on changing individual behavior to reduce the frequency of these incidents. In contrast, Vision Zero is built on the basis that traffic deaths and severe injuries are preventable. Vision Zero emphasizes a Safe Systems approach, which acknowledges that people make mistakes and focuses on influencing system-wide practices, policies, and designs to lessen the severity of crashes.

Approaching the issue of safe mobility in a new way can be challenging, even when everyone agrees on the ultimate goal – in this case, safety for all road users. One limitation to the success and proliferation of Vision Zero in this moment is the lack of a unifying definition and “best practice benchmark.” While an increasing number of jurisdictions may call themselves Vision Zero communities, the authentic and ongoing commitment to the fundamental shift in safety perspective can be uneven.

*The Vision Zero Network and Institute of Transportation Engineers have partnered to develop a set of Vision Zero Core Elements to help communities set priorities, work toward tangible results in promoting safety, and benchmark their progress relative to best practices. This resource encourages leaders to focus on the most impactful actions and helps hold them accountable to their Vision Zero commitments.*

#### TRADITIONAL APPROACH

Traffic deaths are **INEVITABLE**  
**PERFECT** human behavior  
Prevent **COLLISIONS**  
**INDIVIDUAL** responsibility  
Saving lives is **EXPENSIVE**

VS

#### VISION ZERO

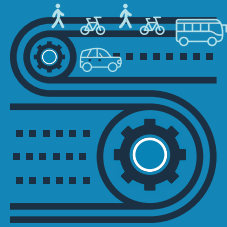
Traffic deaths are **PREVENTABLE**  
Integrate **HUMAN FAILING** in approach  
Prevent **FATAL AND SEVERE CRASHES**  
**SYSTEMS** approach  
Saving lives is **NOT EXPENSIVE**

VISION ZERO NETWORK



Released November 2018

**Thank you to the primary collaborators on this resource:** Jenn Fox & Leah Shahum, *Vision Zero Network*; Jeff Lindley, *ITE*; Dana Weissman & Meghan Mitman, *Fehr & Peers*; Richard Retting, *Sam Schwartz Consulting*.



# CORE ELEMENTS FOR VISION ZERO COMMUNITIES

## Leadership and Commitment

### 1. Public, High-Level, and Ongoing Commitment.

The Mayor and key elected officials and leaders within public agencies, including transportation, public health, and police, commit to a goal of eliminating traffic fatalities and serious injuries within a specific timeframe. Leadership across these agencies consistently engages in prioritizing safety via a collaborative working group and other resource-sharing efforts.

**2. Authentic Engagement.** Meaningful and accessible community engagement toward Vision Zero strategy and implementation is employed, with a focus on equity.

**3. Strategic Planning.** A Vision Zero Action Plan is developed, approved, and used to guide work. The Plan includes explicit goals and measurable strategies with clear timelines, and it identifies responsible stakeholders.

**4. Project Delivery.** Decision-makers and system designers advance projects and policies for safe, equitable multi-modal travel by securing funding and implementing projects, prioritizing roadways with the most pressing safety issues.

## Equity and Engagement

Elevating equity and meaningful community engagement, particularly in low-income communities and communities of color, should be a priority in all stages of Vision Zero work.

## Safe Roadways and Safe Speeds

**5. Complete Streets for All.** Complete Streets concepts are integrated into communitywide plans and implemented through projects to encourage a safe, well-connected transportation network for people using all modes of transportation. This prioritizes safe travel of people over expeditious travel of motor vehicles.

**6. Context-Appropriate Speeds.** Travel speeds are set and managed to achieve safe conditions for the specific roadway context and to protect all roadway users, particularly those most at risk in crashes. Proven speed management policies and practices are prioritized to reach this goal.

## Data-driven Approach, Transparency, and Accountability

**7. Equity-Focused Analysis and Programs.** Commitment is made to an equitable approach and outcomes, including prioritizing engagement and investments in traditionally under-served communities and adopting equitable traffic enforcement practices.

**8. Proactive, Systemic Planning.** A proactive, systems-based approach to safety is used to identify and address top risk factors and mitigate potential crashes and crash severity.

**9. Responsive, Hot Spot Planning.** A map of the community's fatal and serious injury crash locations is developed, regularly updated, and used to guide priority actions and funding.

**10. Comprehensive Evaluation and Adjustments.** Routine evaluation of the performance of all safety interventions is made public and shared with decision makers to inform priorities, budgets, and updates to the Vision Zero Action Plan.

To learn more about the Vision Zero Core Elements, see the Vision Zero Network's full [Vision Zero Core Elements](#) document, which includes further details and links to examples and related resources. In addition, the [Vision Zero Network website](#) and [ITE Safety Resources Toolbox](#) offer useful information on Vision Zero principles, recommended practices, and analysis strategies.