



**TO:** Mayor and Councilmembers  
**FROM:** Rosemarie Gaglione, Public Works Director  
**SUBJECT:** Vision Zero Presentation

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- A. Receive a presentation on the Vision Zero initiative.
- B. Provide feedback and direction to staff as to whether to return to Council with next steps for creating a Vision Zero plan.

**BACKGROUND**

The City of Goleta has been asked to adopt Vision Zero, an international traffic safety initiative, by the Coalition for Sustainable Transportation (COAST). COAST has been working in Santa Barbara County on a variety of initiatives to improve bicyclist and pedestrian safety for many years. A resolution concerning Vision Zero will also be considered at the California League of Cities 2016 Annual Conference. Major cities with high collision and fatality rates, such as San Francisco and Los Angeles, have adopted Vision Zero and created formalized plans for working towards the goal of zero fatalities and serious injuries.

According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1990* (110th edition), from 1957 to 1973, approximately 40,000 to 50,000 people were killed each year in traffic collisions nationwide, prompting Federal, State and grassroots efforts to increase vehicular safety. Changes such as collapsible steering columns, safety glass, seat and shoulder belts, air bags and anti-lock brakes, to name a few, have resulted in safer vehicles and saved lives. As a result, there had been a steady decline in traffic fatalities in this country for decades, reducing annual fatalities to approximately 30,000 deaths per year.

However, according to Federal Highway Administration statistics, in 2015 the death rate spiked to a seven year high of 35,000. This increase is especially concerning given the number of new safety features the automobile industry has been implementing to improve vehicle safety. However, the number of driver distractions has also increased.

Proponents of Vision Zero are advocating for increased attention to the three “E’s” – Engineering, Education and Enforcement – focusing on roadway design, factoring in driver behavior, driver education and traffic safety enforcement to once again reduce traffic related fatalities and serious injuries.

## **DISCUSSION**

Vision Zero is an international traffic safety initiative with an overriding goal of achieving zero fatalities and/or serious injuries due to traffic collisions for all system users: drivers, motorcyclists, bicyclists and pedestrians. The idea began in Sweden in 1997 and has grown steadily since, being adopted by cities world-wide. The cities of Los Angeles and San Francisco are among the cities in California that have adopted Vision Zero. The California League of Cities will be considering adoption of a Vision Zero resolution at their 2016 annual conference.

A core principle of Vision Zero and Toward Zero Deaths (the National Strategy for the US Highway System) is that traffic deaths and injuries are preventable and, therefore, unacceptable. This is in contrast to using statistics and the premise that accidents are bound to happen and some level of injury or death is inevitable and, therefore, acceptable provided the goal is to reduce spikes but not necessarily eliminate the actual number of incidents.

Vision Zero is not a Complete Streets program, but the two programs complement each other by requiring designers to go beyond standard metrics for potential conflicts and consider the environment and users on a site specific basis. With a Vision Zero plan, the design process would include the consideration of driver behavior and temperament. For example, rather than using a standard design for a roadway feature, engineers would also consider: 1) its location and the type of driver (pleasure, commuter, high school student, senior) using the feature; 2) the level of congestion (this could result in risky movements out of frustration); 3) any possibility of misunderstanding the implicit and explicit guides; and, 4) other users such as pedestrians and bicyclists and how their presence might impact driver’s decisions as well as how the bicyclist or pedestrian might be impacted by drivers’ decisions.

Because the League of California Cities will consider Vision Zero at its annual conference and in response to COAST’s request, staff will provide a brief presentation on Vision Zero. If Council so desires, staff can return to Council at a later date with a plan for adopting Vision Zero in the City of Goleta. Doing so would require assistance from a consultant to assist the City in formulating a Vision Zero Plan.

## **GOLETA STRATEGIC PLAN:**

Vision Zero is consistent with the City’s Strategic Plan Strategy to strengthen infrastructure.


**FISCAL IMPACTS**

There are no fiscal impacts related to this presentation. If the Council directs staff to proceed with the creation of a Vision Zero plan, staff will return with an estimated cost to develop a Vision Zero Plan, as well as an estimate of how such a plan would impact the cost of the City’s infrastructure and CIP project budgets in the future.

**Legal Review By:**

  
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Tim W. Giles  
City Attorney

**Approved By:**

  
Michelle Greene  
City Manager