

Executive Summary

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) awarded the Triangle West Transportation Planning Organization (TWTPO) a \$500,000 Safe Streets for All planning grant in 2023 to develop a Safe Streets for All Regional Vision Zero Action Plan. The Plan was initiated to not only improve pedestrian, bicyclist, transit and highway safety in the Triangle West planning area but is also a necessary step to qualify for FHWA Safe Streets for All Implementation Grant funding. The Plan included surveying the community on where they feel safe riding, walking and driving in the region, and which streets need safety improvements. TWTPO analyzed survey results, input from regional stakeholders and the project Technical Advisory Committee, and crash data to create the Vision Zero Action Plan for the region.

Daily trips across Chapel Hill should be safe for everyone—children, parents, coworkers, grandparents, friends, neighbors—every person. Far too often, these daily trips on our transportation network end in tragedy. Between 2017 and 2023, **51 people** were seriously injured or killed in Chapel Hill traffic crashes. The most vulnerable users, including pedestrians, cyclists, and those using wheelchairs or mobility devices, continue to face the highest risk. A small number of streets in Chapel Hill, just under 14% of our roadway network, account for nearly ninety percent of all serious crashes. These High Injury Network (HIN) corridors represent strategic areas for targeted interventions.

For Chapel Hill, the Vision Zero Action Plan aligns well with existing initiatives, including the Land Use Management Ordinance (LUMO) rewrite, Complete Streets policies, Safe Routes to School, and longstanding multimodal transportation goals. It is not just a catalog of projects—it is a roadmap for organizational change and policy alignment, with specific strategies for safer infrastructure, lower speeds, safer behavior, and system accountability. It is a guide for doing things differently and includes project development tools, as well as recommendations for key policy changes and opportunities to explore new programming.

The Plan arrives at a time when momentum for improving street safety is high, but funding access is uncertain. With Safe Streets for All (SS4A) demonstration grants currently frozen, Chapel Hill must focus on actionable policies, planning tools, and quick, low-cost improvements. Fortunately, the Vision Zero Action Plan emphasizes exactly that kind of everyday decision-making that can be executed without major new funding.

Sections of the Plan include:

Roadway Safety Vision

Loss of life and the impact of sustaining life-altering injuries is unacceptable. TWTPO developed this Plan to honor the victims of fatal and serious injury crashes by identifying actions that can increase safety through proactive policies, important safety programs, and strategic project opportunities. Chapel Hill's goal of reaching zero serious injuries and deaths by 2031 is years ahead of [NCDOT's 2024 Strategic Highway Safety Plan Update](#) target of zero fatal and serious injury crashes by 2050. The Plan is rooted in the Safe System Approach to

prioritize safety for all users. Foundational to this Plan is creating change that has broad, society-wide impacts rather than focusing on individual efforts.

The Safe Systems Approach anticipates human error by separating users in space, in time, and by increasing attentiveness and awareness. It also factors in a human's injury tolerances by reducing speeds and impact forces.

Updating policies like land use to reduce personal driving and providing options like walking, biking, and transit can substantially impact safety in people's daily lives. While we all share responsibility for safety, emphasizing the safety interventions that reduce risk and benefit a broader population is critical to eliminating fatal and serious injury crashes.

Regional Crash Summary

Crashes over a seven-year period (2017–2023) highlight the need for change. This section of the Plan presents where these crashes occurred and the people in communities across the region that are being impacted. Results of safety analyses established a High Injury Network (HIN) that includes both roadways and intersections, a High-Risk Network (both roadways and intersections), and a HIN for vulnerable road users (people walking and bicycling). Additionally, this section illustrates how the HIN impacts under-served communities in the TWTPD region.

Focus Areas and Priority Projects

Based on findings from safety analyses, specific crash types and focus areas were identified. Chapel Hill's most dangerous road segments and intersections are along MLK Jr Blvd, Fordham Blvd, and E. Franklin Street. This section emphasizes using proven federal and state-approved safety countermeasures in both proactive and reactive ways to improve safety. Additionally, this section describes criteria—severity, exposure, and risk/likelihood of crashes—that were used to prioritize corridors and intersections across the region for safety interventions.

Using the Plan's analyses, staff will package systemic countermeasures to target our most dangerous streets with a SS4A Implementation grant application by June 26, 2025. This may be the last opportunity to utilize this federal funding source to prevent roadway injuries and deaths on Chapel Hill streets.

Strategies and Actions

Eliminating fatal and serious injury crashes by 2031 will only happen by taking bold actions that impact the roadway system and increase safety for all users. Roadway safety must be integrated into the work of partner agencies, Town departments, and daily choices by individuals in the community to see results. This section establishes important strategy categories that were developed based on analysis results, direct input from the Plan's Technical Advisory Committee, and community feedback. For each strategy category, there are a variety of actions related to policies, programs, and projects that the Town, the TPO, and the State can take to increase safety across the region, in individual communities, and for a variety

of contexts. The recommended strategies and actions are meant to be a starting point, opening doors to more opportunities to pursue safe and enjoyable mobility in Chapel Hill.