



Legislation Text

File #: [21-0736], Version: 1

Receive Update and Provide Guidance on Vision Zero.

Staff:

Colleen Willger, Director
Bergen Watterson, Transportation Planning Manager
Jordan Powell, Complete Streets Specialist

Department:

Planning

Overview:

Chapel Hill has a history of working on pedestrian safety initiatives, through the work of the internal bike and pedestrian team, the Mobility and Connectivity Plan, and the Pedestrian Safety Action Plan. Town staff recommends organizing these existing structures under the umbrella of Vision Zero by adopting a Vision Zero resolution. Town Council can set the tone and direction for Vision Zero through an official commitment to policies and practices that prioritize the safety of all road users in Chapel Hill, with town-wide, organizational support to this commitment.

Vision Zero considers traffic deaths and serious injuries to be preventable, and that policy and street design should prioritize safety rather than vehicular speed and efficiency in order to lessen the severity of crashes. Safety of vulnerable road users would be integral in transportation decision-making, from Traffic Impact Analyses and road restriping to intersection design and traffic signal phasing.

**Recommendation(s):**

That the Council provide feedback on the proposed Vision Zero resolution.

Key Issues:

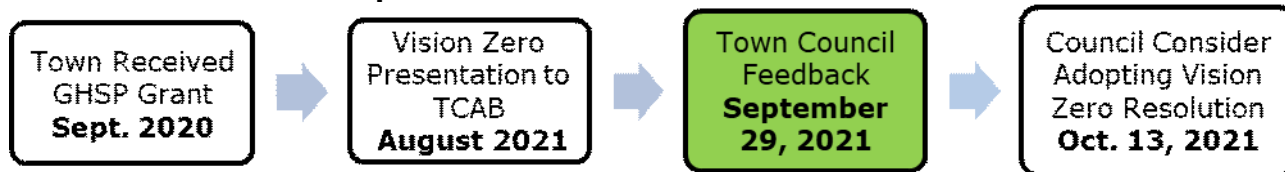
By adopting a Vision Zero resolution, Chapel Hill would:

- Establish a strategy to eliminate all traffic fatalities and severe injuries, while increasing safe, healthy, equitable mobility for all.
- Join Apex, Charlotte, Durham, Greenville, Greensboro, Mooresville, Raleigh, Robeson, Wilmington, and the State of North Carolina. Involvement in this [initiative <https://ncvisionzero.org/>](https://ncvisionzero.org/) will make the Town's commitment even stronger.
- Be part of a larger movement. Currently 20% of American cities with a population larger than 20 ,000 are considering or have adopted Vision Zero, and advocates are pushing for a national Vision Zero Resolution. The acceleration of adoptions will speed up, as will the collective power and voice of the Vision Zero Coalition.
- Enhance work on three key Vision Zero priorities: managing speed, centering equity, and engaging the community. In the past year, the Town received a grant to fund a Complete Streets Specialist, whose work has centered on these priorities.
- Make a statement to the community that Town leadership recognizes the power imbalance wielded historically in street design and the commitment to work toward more equitable streets.

Fiscal Impact/Resources: There are no fiscal impacts associated with adopting this Vision Zero resolution. The Town has grant funding from the Governors Highway Safety Program (GHSP) to support

Vision Zero activities - \$67,000 in FY20-21 and \$64,450 in FY21-22.

Where is this item in its process?



Attachments:

- Draft Resolution
- Draft Staff Presentation
- Staff Memorandum
- Annual Crash Report

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING A VISION ZERO STRATEGY TO HELP ELIMINATE TRAFFIC DEATHS AND SERIOUS INJURIES BY 2031 (XXXX-XX-XX/R-#)

WHEREAS, according to data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, each year approximately 40,000 people are killed in traffic collisions in the United States; and

WHEREAS, from 2016 to 2020, three people died, five suffered severe injuries, and 135 experienced minor injuries while walking or biking on streets in Chapel Hill; and

WHEREAS, one death on Town streets is one too many, and Town and departmental leadership are dedicated to strategies that aim to eliminate deaths and serious injuries on streets in Chapel Hill; and

WHEREAS, seniors, children, people of color, people with disabilities, people in low-income communities, and vulnerable road users such as pedestrians and bicyclists face a disproportionate risk of traffic injuries and fatalities; and

WHEREAS, Vision Zero is a public health-based traffic safety strategy to reduce and eventually eliminate traffic deaths and serious injuries using a data-driven, multi-disciplinary and safe systems approach that also increases safe healthy equitable mobility for all; and

WHEREAS, the Vision Zero strategy is a tool to unite stakeholders such as Transportation, Police, Public Health, UNC, Transit, neighboring municipalities, NCDOT, developers, and others.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the Town of Chapel Hill that the Town of Chapel Hill hereby adopts a goal of eliminating traffic deaths and serious injuries by 2031; and endorses Vision Zero as a comprehensive and holistic approach to achieving this goal.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Town declares that Vision Zero is the town-wide guiding principle for transportation, planning, the design of streets and sidewalks, the maintenance of public rights-of-way, and traffic enforcement.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Town Council requests that the Town Manager establish an interdepartmental staff Vision Zero Executive Committee charged with establishing a shared understanding of Vision Zero, reviewing progress on the Town's Vision Zero goals, as established in the Town's Pedestrian Safety Action Plan (2019), and updating this Action Plan with proposed safety projects and associated cost estimates for the Town to reach the goal of zero deaths and serious injuries by 2031.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Town Council accepts the [National Association of City Transportation Officials \(NACTO\) guides <https://nacto.org/publications/design-guides/>](https://nacto.org/publications/design-guides/) as nationally accepted best design practices, and that the Planning Department and Public Works Department shall evaluate and recommend modifications to existing roadway standards and policies.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Vision Zero will be implemented in an equitable manner accounting for historic inequities in transportation and safety investments across the Chapel Hill community.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the safety of all road users shall take priority over vehicular level of service and throughput, and safety of vulnerable road users shall be given top priority in transportation decisions.

This the _____ day of _____, 2021.

The Agenda will reflect the text below and/or the motion text will be used during the meeting.

PRESENTER: Bergen Watterson, Transportation Planning Manager
Jordan Powell, Complete Streets Specialist

The purpose of this item is for the Council to provide feedback on the proposed Vision Zero resolution.