

CTSC Work Plan FY 2016-2018

Vision Zero

Mission

The mission of the Community Traffic Safety Coalition (CTSC) and its South County Bicycle and Pedestrian Work Group (SCBPWG) is to prevent traffic-related injuries, while promoting the use of active and shared modes of transportation. With a focus on the most vulnerable road users, the Coalition educates all road users in safety practices to decrease the risk and severity of traffic collisions, and advocates for improved conditions to make all methods of transportation safer. The County of Santa Cruz Health Services Agency (HSA) supplies staff and administration for the CTSC.

Vision Zero Work Plan Summary

Several CTSC and SCBPWG members attended the Silicon Valley Bike Summit and the California Bike Summit in 2015 and brought back a variety of ideas, including Vision Zero. Vision Zero is a world-wide traffic safety program with an aim to end all fatalities and serious injuries on the roadway system. In discussing this idea, Coalition members realized that the mission, goals and activities of the CTSC align very well with this aim. A group decision was made to use Vision Zero as an overarching theme for the next CTSC two-year work plan.

The work plan, developed by Coalition members, will first aim to develop a clear picture of traffic safety in Santa Cruz County through data collection and a community assessment. This phase is to be followed by outreach and education and a community organizing effort. In each phase a deliverable will be produced: 1) A State of Traffic Safety in Santa Cruz County report, 2) A stakeholder and community organizing campaign, and 3) A Vision Zero toolkit for use by local jurisdictions.

Throughout this work plan, CTSC/SCBPWG will provide support, technical assistance, and resources to jurisdictions and the community around Vision Zero. The Coalition supports the Vision Zero view that each roadway death and injury is preventable. The goal of this work plan is for each jurisdiction in the county to consider and adopt a Vision Zero policy and develop goals and strategies for preventing injuries and deaths among all road users.

History and Philosophy of Vision Zero

A Vision Zero policy was first implemented in Sweden in 1997 where they have since reduced traffic fatalities by 50% despite the fact that traffic counts have steadily risen. Other parts of Europe and a number of cities in the United States, first New York and then San Francisco, have adopted similar policies. The vision applies to all road users and shifts the language, and thus the concept, from “accident” to “crash” or “collision” with a focus on systemic changes.

The long standing perception in the public and the media is that traffic collisions resulting in fatalities or serious injuries are an unavoidable part of our transportation system. Vision Zero institutionalizes the belief that all traffic fatalities and serious injuries are preventable, each reflecting a failure in the system. Vision Zero's underlying philosophy is that all road users have a right to be safe in traffic and that therefore the only acceptable number of traffic-related deaths and serious injuries is zero. While there will always be human error, mistakes made on our roadways should not result in death.

The national Safe Routes to School movement, the California Active Transportation Program, Complete Streets policies, and other such efforts have initiated a change in the dialogue and perceptions that have previously existed about acceptable levels of risk. Safety has always been one of the considerations in designing streets and in making infrastructure improvements. Vision Zero places safety as the number one priority in its approach to traffic management.

Closer to home, Vision Zero has been adopted in San Mateo, San Jose, and more recently Fremont. There are now many examples and models throughout the United States to guide new jurisdictions in considering this vision. Tangible results have been seen in many cities that are adopting a Vision Zero policy and implementing best practices to reduce traffic related fatality rates.

Why the Timing is Right for Vision Zero in Santa Cruz County

- ✓ Santa Cruz County is ranked 2nd in the State for cyclist injuries and fatalities and 4th for pedestrian under 15 years of age according to the California Office of Traffic Safety.
- ✓ Many traffic injuries and fatalities are centered on a few key corridors.
- ✓ Elected officials in some jurisdictions are becoming interested.
- ✓ The Safe Routes to School philosophy is well ingrained in local schools.
- ✓ Vision Zero planning and implementation is eligible for funding through federal and state grant programs.
- ✓ Momentum and support are building in the national Vision Zero movement.
- ✓ Smaller cities and counties are now coming on board.
- ✓ The Federal Highway Administration and Caltrans have adopted a Toward Zero Deaths vision.
- ✓ Promotion of active transportation is a top priority nationally and locally.
- ✓ The League of American Bicyclists recommends adoption of a Vision Zero policy for the City of Santa Cruz after the City received a Gold Level Bicycle Friendly Communities award.
- ✓ The CTSC/SCBPWG has committed to providing support to local jurisdictions.
- ✓ Partner organizations have offered to collaborate.

Vision Zero Work Plan and Timeline

Phase I July 2016 - June 2017

Conduct a data collection and community assessment.

- Compile available quantitative multi-modal traffic safety data.
- Conduct focus groups and key informant interviews to gather qualitative data.
- Collaborate with Bike Santa Cruz County on bicycle transportation data.

Publish a State of Traffic Safety in Santa Cruz County report.

- Find visual expressions of data, such as infographics.
- Pair perceptions and realities side by side.
- Use information gathered by other organizations and in Bicycle Friendly Community applications.
- Publicize with press event/community forum event
- Distribute to elected officials, community, staff, etc.

Phase II July 2017 - December 2017

Hold stakeholder meetings introducing the idea of Vision Zero.

- Address elected officials, advisory bodies, and partner agencies.
- Reach out to stakeholders, such as departments of public works, engineering, planning, parking, police and fire, school district boards, hospitals, UCSC and Cabrillo.
- Invite communication between elected officials here and those from other Vision Zero communities.

Conduct a community education and organizing campaign.

- Host a community forum with invited guest speakers and/or a panel.
- Utilize infographics on change in terminology from “accident” to “crash” or “collision”.
- Develop a group presentation to be used at public meetings.
- Post information on social media and the CTSC website.
- Meet with TV, radio, and print media reporters/anchors/editors.
- Issue press releases and/or hold a press conference.

Create a system for recognizing and responding to fatalities and serious injuries, such as:

- Holding an annual memorial for those whose lives were lost
- Displaying visible roadside memorials to those who have died.
- Developing talking points to respond to news stories and notify elected officials.

Phase III July 2017 - June 2018

Promote Vision Zero policy adoption to each jurisdiction.

- Explore interest for policy with elected officials.
- Speak with city/county staff about implementation.
- Identify funding needs and sources.

Develop a Santa Cruz County Vision Zero Toolkit.

- Review Vision Zero plans adopted by other jurisdictions and successful strategies implemented.
- Based on the data collected in Phase I, create a list of suggested goals and strategies for implementation countywide.
- Use the traditional E's of Education, Engineering, Enforcement, Encouragement, and Evaluation, adding Equity and Engagement into all of the traditional E's.
- Create goals that are quantifiable and measurable with short-term and long-term objectives.
- Identify multi-jurisdictional areas to target (such as the Soquel Ave/Drive corridor).
- Include a list of possible funding sources.

Phase IV July 2017 - ongoing

Assist jurisdictions as they adopt and implement Vision Zero policies.

- Assist jurisdictional Vision Zero Task Forces in the development of action plans with strategies outlining projects and policy changes.
- Provide technical assistance in tracking and measuring progress, as well as evaluating programs at regular intervals.
- Provide resources in identifying funding for maintenance and sustainability of projects.
- Continue ongoing dialogue with elected officials and staff about Vision Zero.

CTSC/SCBPWG Roles and Responsibilities

The Coalition Staff is employed by the County of Santa Cruz Health Services Agency (HSA) and is responsible for assisting the coalition in managing its operations, including: coalition meetings and communication; community engagement; strategic plan development, implementation and evaluation.

The Coalition Members and Partner Organizations actively participate in meetings and play an advisory role in fiscal management and strategic planning. Members and Partner Organizations take on specific work plan tasks as appropriate.

Coalition Leaders (Co-Chairs) are elected by Coalition Members for two-year terms, and in addition to all the responsibilities of Coalition Members, are also responsible for chairing Coalition meetings and providing expertise and guidance to Coalition Staff.