

COMMUNITY TRAFFIC SAFETY COALITION

of SANTA CRUZ COUNTY



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CTSC Work Plan: Vision Zero

Fiscal Years 2022-2024

CTSC Vision and Mission

The mission of the Community Traffic Safety Coalition (CTSC) of the Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency is to prevent traffic-related injuries and fatalities for all road users, with a focus on people bicycling and walking. The CTSC envisions safe, accessible, and equitable transportation for all.

Vision Zero Needs Statement

Vision Zero is a world-wide traffic safety program that aims to eliminate all traffic fatalities and severe injuries while increasing safe, healthy, and equitable mobility for all. The mission, goals, and activities of the CTSC align with this aim. In June of 2022, CTSC will complete their sixth year of Vision Zero work and this plan will continue that work into 2024.

In 2019, OTS ranked Santa Cruz County as the 3rd worst for bicyclists killed and injured compared to 58 California counties. The City of Santa Cruz (in the north part of the county) was ranked 1st for the number of bicyclist injuries/fatalities compared to 105 similar sized cities. The City of Watsonville (in the south part of the county) was ranked 1st for pedestrian injuries/fatalities compared to 105 other similar sized cities.

According to [UC Berkeley SafeTREC's Transportation Injury Mapping System](#) (TIMS), the number of people killed or seriously injured in Santa Cruz County in the 3-year period from 2018 to 2020 has increased to 154.7 people on average as compared to 135.3 people on average from 2015 to 2017. According to more recent media accounts, in the six-month period between October 2021 and March 2022, CTSC staff documented a total of 22 crashes involving serious injuries or fatalities in the county. Of the 13 crashes involving fatalities, three of those killed were pedestrians and one was a bicyclist.

The serious traffic safety problem in our county led us to Vision Zero. From our data analysis and community engagement, we know that traffic violence has taken a disproportionate toll on Santa Cruz County bicyclists and pedestrians. To begin ensuring safety in our transportation system, our two most populous cities, Watsonville and Santa Cruz, passed Vision Zero policies in 2018 and 2019, respectively, to eliminate traffic related fatalities and severe injuries by 2030 for all road users.

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Safe System Core Principles

In order to achieve Vision Zero, many countries have moved away from using the traditional E's (Education, Engineering, Enforcement, Encouragement, Evaluation, and Equity) and instead have adopted a Safe System approach to road safety, including the U.S. Department of Transportation. The Safe System approach works by building and reinforcing multiple layers of protection to both prevent crashes from happening in the first place and minimize the harm caused to those involved when crashes do occur.



Source: <https://highways.dot.gov/public-roads/winter-2022/01>

In this sense, it is a comprehensive and systematic approach to road safety that is human-centered and incorporates the following principles:

1. **Death and Serious Injuries are Unacceptable.** A Safe System approach prioritizes the elimination of crashes that result in death and serious injuries.
2. **Humans Make Mistakes.** People will inevitably make mistakes and decisions that can lead or contribute to crashes, but the transportation system can be designed and operated to accommodate certain types and levels of human mistakes and avoid death and serious injuries when a crash occurs.

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3. **Humans Are Vulnerable.** Human bodies have physical limits for tolerating crash forces before death or serious injury occurs; therefore, it is critical to design and operate a transportation system that is human-centric and accommodates physical human vulnerabilities.
4. **Responsibility is Shared.** All stakeholders – including government at all levels, industry, non-profit/advocacy, researchers, and the general public – are vital to preventing fatalities and serious injuries on our roadways.
5. **Safety is Proactive.** Proactive tools should be used to identify and address safety issues in the transportation system, rather than waiting for crashes to occur and reacting afterwards.
6. **Redundancy is Crucial.** Reducing risks requires that all parts of the transportation system be strengthened, so that if one part fails, the other parts still protect people.

Source: <https://highways.dot.gov/public-roads/winter-2022/01>

A statistic often used when discussing traffic safety is that “more than 90% of traffic crashes are due to human error.” This view was dominant in the five E’s approach, used by the Safe Routes to School movement, and places a majority of the blame on the individual, whether that be the pedestrian, cyclist, or driver. By using a more effective and equitable Safe System approach, Vision Zero objectives can be aligned with the five elements displayed in the wheel above: Safer People, Safer Roads, Safer Vehicles, Safer Speeds, and Post-Crash Care.

Data has shown that underserved communities and communities of color oftentimes experience the highest rates of fatal and injury crashes. A study done by the CTSC in 2017 found that more than half of our county’s fatal and life changing injury crashes occur on only 6% of our streets with more than half of these dangerous streets located in low-income neighborhoods www.sctrfficsafety.org/visionzero . Even as the Coalition moves towards utilizing a Safe System approach, equity will continue to remain an emphasis for all the work conducted.

Vision Zero Work Plan Objectives and Activities for Fiscal Years 2022-2024

Primary Objectives:

1. Continue to assist the City of Watsonville in Vision Zero Action Plan implementation.
 2. Assist the City of Santa Cruz in developing a Vision Zero Task Force and Action Plan.
 3. Promote Vision Zero adoption and implementation in all other jurisdictions.
 4. Develop and maintain countywide Vision Zero collaboration and support.
- 1) Continue to assist City of Watsonville in Vision Zero Action Plan implementation through activities, such as:

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- Provide support and assistance to the City of Watsonville and other south county organizations in managing the Watsonville Vision Zero Task Force.
 - Advocate for continued community engagement and equity prioritization.
 - Provide technical assistance in tracking and measuring progress, as well as evaluating programs.
 - Encourage accountability and transparency throughout plan implementation.
 - Help in identifying funding sources for implementation and sustainability of projects.
- 2) Assist the City of Santa Cruz in developing a Vision Zero Task Force and Action Plan through activities, such as:
- Advocate for community engagement and equity prioritization in Vision Zero initiatives.
 - Provide a public health perspective into strategies and policy objectives.
 - Assist in development of measurable and attainable goals for Vision Zero action items.
 - Encourage accountability and transparency at all stages of Vision Zero plan implementation.
- 3) Promote Vision Zero adoption and implementation in all other jurisdictions through activities, such as:
- Invite communication between local jurisdictions and other Vision Zero communities.
 - Convene city/county staff to discuss Vision Zero policy adoption and implementation.
 - Create traffic violence data summaries for jurisdictions considering Vision Zero.
 - Support implementation of Vision Zero Action Plans once adopted.
- 4) Develop and maintain countywide Vision Zero collaboration and support through activities, such as:

Proposed activities here are aligned with the five *Safe System elements: Safer People, Safer Roads, Safer Vehicles, Safer Speeds, and Post-Crash Care*

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Safer People:

- Host events for elected officials and relevant government staff members to experience traveling through the county using active modes of transportation.
- Reframe the narrative around road safety to reflect the shared responsibility among various stakeholders, instead of a focus on individual behaviors.
- Participate in the regional Street Smarts campaign to bring awareness and education of road safety issues to the public.
- Provide educational materials about shared- and micro-mobility programs and options to the community.
- Collaborate with County Substance Use Disorders Services (SUDS) on DUI/impaired driving prevention.
- Develop educational materials on Safe Systems and informational handouts about Vision Zero to share with the media that helps guide their communications on crashes.
- Continue child passenger safety education for parents and caregivers on properly securing young passengers in their vehicles.

Safer Roads:

- Use all relevant safety data to supplement crash data when evaluating problem areas and traffic situations.
- Include community members and community feedback when designing traffic safety systems.
- Incorporate systems-level changes that allow for consideration of project impacts on those using active transportation.
- Provide opportunities for community members and advocates to provide input to decision makers during planning stages of infrastructure projects.
- Advocate for planning and engineering efforts that incorporate a Safe Systems approach, such as reduce speeds by narrowing travel lanes.
- Develop questions for candidates running for office regarding safe and active transportation.
- Promote protected or separated bicycle and pedestrian facilities when feasible.
- Conduct a crash data analysis focused on arterials for each jurisdiction.
- Encourage funding and land use planning that increases opportunities for more active and sustainable forms of transportation.

Safer Vehicles:

- Provide input on local, state, or federal policies and designs that make vehicles safer, such as collision avoidance systems and connected vehicle technology.

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- Keep informed about the latest car seat and vehicle restraint system safety technology and recall information.
- Advocate for appropriate safety measures, such as installing lateral protective devices (LPDs), also known as side guards, for local jurisdictions and private fleets with large commercial vehicles.

Safer Speeds:

- Implement creative projects to slow down traffic and reduce the potential for crashes to cause serious injuries and fatalities.
- Engage with local government to address traffic speed issues that community members experience.
- Support projects that slow vehicle speeds and protect cyclists and pedestrians.
- Work with jurisdictions to acquire funding to implement temporary projects that slow vehicle speeds.
- Find research reports on effective measures to slow down drivers to share with local jurisdictions.

Post-Crash Care:

- Post online acknowledgement and response to lives lost and those severely injured.
- Maintain a current database of serious injury and fatality crashes reported by the media and community members.
- Involve multiple stakeholders, such as media and road safety advocates, to review factors leading to a crash.
- Identify the built environment factors that played into crashes and understand that the designers of those systems hold responsibility as well.
- Work with media contacts to review collision factors, such as road design, when reporting on crashes.
- Work with law enforcement agencies to share local crash data and report on traffic citation trends.
- Change the narrative around responsibility for crashes to look past individual behaviors and to focus on the road system holistically.
- Assist jurisdictions in developing a plan to respond to fatal and severe injury crashes.
- Participate in the World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims or other annual memorial events.
- Develop resources to support families who have been impacted by traffic violence.

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CTSC Roles and Responsibilities

The coalition staff are employed by the County of Santa Cruz Health Services Agency (HSA) and are responsible for assisting the coalition in managing its operations, including coalition meetings, member communication, and community engagement, as well as work plan development, implementation, and evaluation. The coalition members and partner agencies actively participate in meetings and play an advisory role in fiscal management and strategic planning. Members and partner agencies take on specific work plan tasks as appropriate. Two coalition leaders (Co-Chairs) are elected by coalition members for two-year terms and are responsible for facilitating coalition meetings, providing expertise and guidance to coalition staff, and signing coalition letters.

CTSC will provide support, technical assistance, and resources to jurisdictions and the community to implement Vision Zero, as well as develop and maintain collaborative relationships for other grant funded traffic safety programs that support Vision Zero. The Coalition and staff are also committed to providing traffic safety programming that the community has relied on for many years, such as the Ride n' Stride education program, the Bicycle Traffic School diversion program, Bicycle Helmet Fit and Distribution Sites, participation in Bike/Walk to School and other community outreach events, Pace Car and Trash Can Sticker traffic calming programs, maintenance of the CTSC website at www.sctrafficsafety.org and Facebook page, and traffic related injury and fatality surveillance.