

RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL

No. 73

Approved February 21, 2024

WHEREAS, The life and health of all people living and traveling within the City of Providence is our utmost priority, and no one should die or be seriously injured while traveling on our city streets; and

WHEREAS, Vision Zero is the concept that traffic deaths and serious injuries on our roadways are unacceptable; and

WHEREAS, According to a comprehensive study conducted by the Providence Streets Coalition, between 2011 and 2021 there were 2,200 recorded instances of cars hitting pedestrians and 904 instances of cars hitting cyclists; and

WHEREAS, Mitigating these accidents should be a top priority of Providence; and

WHEREAS, The Vision Zero Network was created to “eliminate traffic fatalities and severe injuries among all road users while increasing safe, healthy, equitable mobility.” It envisions a paradigm shift in recognizing the preventable nature of traffic deaths and crashes, including recognizing system changes to incorporate human failure and optimize safe alternate transportation; and

WHEREAS, Speed is recognized as a major determining factor of survival in a crash; and

WHEREAS, Children, older adults, people of color, people with disabilities, people who are unhoused, and people with low income face a significantly disproportionate risk of traffic injuries and fatalities; and

WHEREAS, The 2020 Great Streets Plan and Green and Complete Streets Advisory Council has already dedicated the City to the improvement of transportation through centering of *Great Streets*, which are defined as “safe for all people,” “clean, green and sustainable,” “inclusive for all,” and are “vibrant and prosperous”; and

WHEREAS, The Great Streets Plan also commits to “lowering greenhouse gas emissions” and to “connect every neighborhood in the city with low-stress, high-comfort facilities for people of all ages and abilities to walk, run, bike, scoot, and skate along”; and

WHEREAS, The Providence Climate Justice Plan includes targets to reduce vehicle miles traveled, increase public transit ridership, and increase sidewalk maintenance and investment in frontline communities and includes a strategy to “invest in infrastructure to make walking and riding bicycles safer and more accessible, especially in low-income areas”; and

WHEREAS, The Act on Climate commits the state to carbon neutrality by 2050, with 45% below 1990 emissions levels by 2030 and 80% by 2040; and

WHEREAS, As the City invests in the mobility infrastructure such as sidewalks and streets, it is imperative to integrate safe and sustainable options for all residents to engage in multimodal travel, so there is a decrease in traffic crashes, traffic deaths, and greenhouse gas emissions, which strengthens the health and quality of life for all residents in Providence; and

WHEREAS, Successful Vision Zero programs are a result of both a complete government approach (i.e., interdepartmental, coordinated initiatives) and community support of Vision Zero objectives and action plans; and

WHEREAS, The City will need to implement commonsense, best-practice programs and policy and take advantage of current transportation development projects, including the pursuit of outside funding to create safe and green transportation for all. The Council seeks to partner with the Mayor and the Administration on these important initiatives.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the City of Providence adopts the goal of eliminating all traffic deaths and serious injuries by 2030 and endorses Vision Zero as a comprehensive holistic approach to achieving this goal.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the City will incorporate this vision into the implementation of all relevant existing plans and policies, including Act on Climate, the Climate Justice Plan, the Great Streets Plan, and the Green and Complete Streets ordinance.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, The City of Providence adopts the Vision Zero policy attached hereto as Exhibit A and makes it part of this Resolution, effective immediately.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That upon passage a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, to the Director of the Department of Sustainability, to the Director of the Department of Public Works, to the Traffic Engineer, the Director of the Department of Planning and Development, the Director of the Rhode Island Department of Transportation, the Chair of the Green and Complete Streets Advisory Council, to the Director of the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority.


IN CITY COUNCIL
FEB 15 2024

READ AND PASSED


RACHEL M. MILLER, PRESIDENT

CLERK

I HEREBY APPROVE.


Mayor
Date: 2/21/24



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February 13, 2024

Dear Members of the Providence City Council,

AARP Rhode Island strongly supports the proposed city council resolution establishing Providence as a Vision Zero City, which adopts the goal of eliminating all traffic deaths and serious injuries by 2030 and the Vision Zero Policy found in Exhibit A.

The road safety crisis in the United States is national in scope. Although the dramatic increases in traffic fatalities that occurred in 2020 and 2021 are slowly declining in some states, traffic fatalities in Rhode Island accelerated in the [first half of 2023 by 193%!](#)

Older adults are disproportionately killed or injured by traffic crashes, and the road safety crisis is particularly acute for older adults who are walking or bicycling. Nationally, the age cohorts with the two highest [pedestrian death rates](#) are people aged 60-64 and 55-59. [Death rates while biking](#) for people aged 60-64 and 55-59 are double the rate for the population overall.

AARP has a vested interest in improving the safety of streets for pedestrians and older drivers. Transportation is a vital link that connects people to their communities. Older adults need a variety of convenient and safe transportation options. They provide access to jobs, social activities, medical appointments, and community services that support their independence.

AARP research concludes that policy initiatives like Vision Zero can be a powerful way to eliminate traffic deaths and serious injuries, especially when they are tied to specific policy actions that address implementation and accountability. Specific actions included in the Vision Zero Policy—such as its emphasis on data collection, the interdepartmental task force, the advisory group, community engagement, and the reporting requirements—reflect the necessary implementation and accountability approach.

In addition, the Resolution and Vision Zero Policy appropriately emphasize vulnerable road users, priority populations including older adults, and historically underinvested areas. AARP recognizes that the road safety crisis does not impact all populations and neighborhoods equally. Not only are older adults more likely to suffer death or serious injury, the fear of unsafe roads may keep them from engaging in healthy behaviors such as exercising or participating in social activities. Unsafe road infrastructure also has outsized impacts on people with lower

incomes and racial or ethnic groups who are typically over-represented among traffic victims. Being able to trust that you can walk, bicycle, or use mobility devices on public roads safely has significant physical, social, and economic benefits for individuals, families, neighborhoods, and society as a whole.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Catherine Taylor', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Catherine Taylor
State Director

Resources

NHTSA, "Early Estimate of Motor Vehicle Traffic Fatalities For the First Half (January–June) of 2023," September 2023, <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813514>.

NHTSA, "Traffic Safety Facts: Pedestrians," June 2023, <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813458>.

NHTSA, "Traffic Safety Facts: Bicyclists and Other Cyclists," June 2023, <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813484>.