

Street Safety, Data Sharing and Collaboration Policy Attachment D

Appendix 2: Data Trends and Existing Conditions



Data Trends and Best Practices

Consequences of Unsafe Streets

According to state data, 719 people were killed and 88,068 people were injured by vehicle collisions in LA County in 2019.¹ Vehicle collisions are the fourth leading cause of **premature** death in the County, ahead of homicides, strokes, and lung cancer.² This is due to the fact that collisions harm people of all ages. Crashes are in fact the leading cause of death for children aged 5-14, the second leading cause of death for ages 15-24 and the fourth leading cause of death for those 25-45.

Deaths from collisions are also not equitably distributed. According to research by UCLA, Black people, who are 8.6 percent of Los Angeles City's population, were 14.1 percent of those killed by collisions between 2013 and 2017.³ Traffic violence also ranks as a particularly high cause of death for Latino and Hawaiian Native and Other Pacific Islanders residents.⁴ People experiencing homelessness in LA County were approximately 10 to 15 times more likely to die from traffic collisions than the general public.⁵

There are also disparities in deaths and injuries by mode of travel. 329 of those killed across LA County in 2019 were walking or cycling.⁶ This represents 46% of those who lost their lives, a disproportionate number given that the walk and bike share of trips in LA County is approximately 15 percent for non-commute trips and 5 percent for commute trips.⁷

During 2020, when there was significantly less driving, deaths from collisions in the City of Los Angeles were just three percent lower than in 2019. LADOT officials attribute this to a "pandemic of speeding" during times when fewer cars were on the road.⁸ In 2021, deaths from collisions rose to be 19% higher than in 2020 and 21% higher than in 2019.⁹ This troubling trend of increasing traffic deaths also occurred across California and nationally in 2021.¹⁰

¹ *Transportation Injury Mapping System (TIMS), Safe Transportation Research and Education Center, University of California, Berkeley. 2021. <https://tims.berkeley.edu/>*

² *County of Los Angeles Department of Public Health. Patterns of Mortality in Los Angeles County, 2008-2017. Appendixes B3, C1 and C3. December 2019.*

³ *Madeline Brozen and Annaleigh Yahata Ekman. The Need to Prioritize Black Lives in LA's Traffic Safety Efforts. UCLA Lewis Center for Regional Policy Studies. December 2020. <https://www.lewis.ucla.edu/research/black-lives-la-traffic-safety/>*

⁴ *Patterns of Mortality.*

⁵ *Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, Center for Health Impact Evaluation, Recent Trends In Mortality Rates and Causes of Death Among People Experiencing Homelessness in Los Angeles County, January 2021. http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/chie/reports/HomelessMortality2020_CHIEBrief_Final.pdf*

⁶ *Transportation Injury Mapping System (TIMS)*

⁷ *US Census 2018 for commute; National Household Travel Survey - California 2017 for other trips.*

⁸ *Ryan Fonseca. "Traffic Was Historically Low In 2020. The Death Toll On LA's Streets Was Not." LAist. April 29, 2021. <https://laist.com/news/transportation/2020-traffic-deaths-los-angeles-pandemic>*

⁹ *Dakota Smith. "Hundreds Die in L.A. Traffic Crashes in 2021. Is Vision Zero a failure? Los Angeles Times. January 9, 2022. <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2022-01-09/traffic-deaths-vision-zero-garcetti>*

¹⁰ *Saul Gonzalez. "Traffic Deaths in California Are on the Rise. Here's How LA and Other Big Cities Are Trying to Change That." KQED. February 4, 2022.*

Pedestrian deaths in particular have increased in Los Angeles County and nationwide in recent years.¹¹ Some likely causes of this rise are an increase in the size, height and engine power of passenger vehicles, which contribute to more deadly vehicle-pedestrian collisions;¹² as well as relatively slow progress in transforming the road grid in LA County into complete streets with infrastructure that is safe for all road users.¹³

76 percent of Metro transit riders get to their first bus or train of the day by walking, and another 4 percent by bike or skateboard.¹⁴ The reality and perception of safe streets therefore can impact people's willingness to use transit in addition to their willingness to use active transportation.

Vision Zero strategies

Vision Zero plans and policies are considered the best practice to reduce deaths and injuries from vehicle collisions. The core goal of Vision Zero is to eliminate roadway deaths, because society has an ethical obligation to ensure that people do not die when traveling. Vision Zero's logic is that humans are not perfect, that mistakes can never be eliminated from transportation, and that *therefore the best way to reduce harm is to design streets and vehicles in a manner that ensures that mistakes do not lead to deaths or serious injury*. For example, making the road network into complete streets with safe space for all users (bus-only lanes, protected lanes for cycling, sidewalks and safe crosswalks, vehicle lanes) reduces conflict between larger, faster vehicles and vulnerable road users. Lower speed limits and streets physically designed to make speeding difficult also save lives by lowering the chance that a mistake and collision results in death or serious injury. Vision Zero strategies have also traditionally included strengthening enforcement of traffic laws. Increased inclusion of diverse and community-based perspectives have led street safety experts and practitioners to pursue a more nuanced approach that recognizes that increased law enforcement has a disproportionate impact on communities of color.¹⁵

Vision Zero policies originated in Sweden in 1997, when the approach was adopted by that nation's parliament. Its implementation resulted in a 60 percent reduction in roadway fatalities

<https://www.kqed.org/news/11903812/traffic-deaths-in-california-are-on-the-rise-heres-how-la-and-other-big-cities-are-trying-to-change-that> ; National Highway Safety Traffic Administration. "NHTSA Data Estimates Indicate Traffic Fatalities Continued to Rise at Record Pace in First Nine Months of 2021." Press Release. February 1, 2022. <https://www.nhtsa.gov/press-releases/traffic-fatalities-estimates-jan-sept-2021>

¹¹ Fonseca. "Traffic Was Historically Low In 2020."

¹² Justin Tyndall, *Pedestrian deaths and large vehicles*, *Economics of Transportation*, Volumes 26–27, 2021, 100219, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2212012221000241>

¹³ Susan Carpenter. "LA is less bike friendly than NYC and San Francisco, new study says." Spectrumnews1. June 7, 2021.

<https://spectrumnews1.com/ca/la-west/transportation/2021/06/07/la-is-less-bike-friendly-than-nyc-and-san-francisco>

¹⁴ Metro On-Board Customer Satisfaction Survey. October-November 2019.

http://media.metro.net/projects_studies/research/images/infographics/system_results_fall_2019.pdf

¹⁵ Vision Zero Network. "Safe Mobility is a Right. Vision Zero Communities Should Commit to Equity From the Start." <https://visionzeronetnetwork.org/resources/equity/>

between 2000 and 2019.¹⁶ Vision Zero policies have been successfully used elsewhere. In 2019, there were zero pedestrian or cyclist deaths and close to zero motorist deaths in Helsinki, Finland and in Oslo, Norway, and no children younger than 16 died in vehicle crashes in all of Norway.¹⁷ LA County has ten million residents while these two cities each have fewer than 700,000; and neither place centered motor vehicles in their planning as strongly as greater LA did during the 20th century. Still, their success shows what can be accomplished when road design aims at safety for all.

The City of Los Angeles adopted a Vision Zero plan in 2015 aiming for zero deaths by 2025;¹⁸ LA County's 2019 Vision Zero plan seeks zero deaths on unincorporated County roads by 2035.¹⁹ Since deaths and injuries are still high, Metro can play a useful role as partner to local jurisdictions towards the goal of making streets safer.

¹⁶ Swedish Transport Administration. *Vision Zero timeline*.

https://www.roadsafetysweden.com/contentassets/7ecbcb46d4684a9982b1f85c3bd8cb1e/4950x2500mm_monter-nollvisionen_tidslinje_20100219.pdf

¹⁷ Jessica Murray. "How Helsinki and Oslo cut pedestrian deaths to zero." March 16, 2020.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/mar/16/how-helsinki-and-oslo-cut-pedestrian-deaths-to-zero>

¹⁸ Vision Zero Los Angeles- 2015/2025. <https://view.joomag.com/vision-zero-los-angeles/0915902001459876247?short>

¹⁹ Vision Zero Los Angeles County: a Plan for Safer Roadways, 2020-2025.

<https://pw.lacounty.gov/visionzero/docs/SCAG-LACounty-VZ-Action-Plan-ver-D-hiRes-single-11-25-2019-rev.pdf>