



BOARD/COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

Public Safety Commission

Recommendation Number: 20160201: Vision Zero Report

WHEREAS, Vision Zero Recommendations from Austin Public Safety Commission which, if adopted now, would have immediate impact on reducing fatal and critical injury accidents.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Public Safety Commission Board has approved these five recommendations:

1. Increased enforcement on both high speed and neighborhood roadways, along with more aggressive prosecution of offenders, must be the most important recommendation. Because of APD's shortage of officers, this will require funding for sufficient overtime for Austin Police Department.
2. Equal emphasis between high speed roadways and secondary streets, most important being neighborhood streets, with immediate reevaluation of all posted speed limits, most especially in neighborhoods.
3. The Department of Transportation justifying to the Vision Zero Task its use of resources so they are in fact directed where they will have the most immediate impact, with appropriate emphasis given to pedestrian safety devices such as Pedestrian Hybrid Beacons.
4. Since 34% of fatal accidents involve unlicensed/suspended license drivers, whenever a car is stopped for any reason, and the driver is unlicensed/suspended license, the car must be impounded.
5. Continuation of the Vision Zero Task Force with management of the process returned to the Planning Department.

Very important is changing the conversation so that focus is not primarily on high speed roadways such as IH-35, but making equally important neighborhood and secondary streets, with recognition of the risks on these streets to pedestrians, bicyclists, and children at play. We know that speeds over 30 miles-per-hour are especially dangerous for people walking or biking. Nine out of ten healthy adults hit by a vehicle traveling 20 mph will survive, but at just 40 mph, those

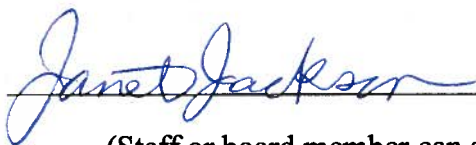
odds are reversed. This means the speeds on most Austin roads are potentially deadly to people walking and biking. Dangerous driver behaviors account for 90% of deaths and incapacitating injuries between 2010-14. Speed is a factor called out in the contributing factors in police reports, but even when vehicle speed isn't what is reported as a contributing factor, it is ultimately what determines whether someone survives or dies: improper maneuvers, distracted driving, etc. simply aren't as deadly at low speed. And from p. 26 of draft plan: Research clearly links higher speeds to increased crash occurrence and severity of crashes. Higher speed increases stopping distance, making it harder to avoid a crash and increasing the severity of crashes. At higher speeds, a driver's field of vision is effectively narrowed, inhibiting their ability to see and react to potential hazards. Even when speed is not a cause of a crash, it is the key variable influencing the severity of injuries and damage. The Institute of Transport Economics advises that "if government wants to develop a road transport system in which nobody is killed or permanently injured, speed is the most important factor to regulate".

In addition, Commission members agreed that the draft must be clearly and succinctly re-written with significantly fewer "recommendations", leaving a manageable few ranked by level of impact opportunity and that have very specific nexus to the goal of significantly reducing traffic related fatal and serious injury incidents. It could easily have at least half its current number of pages. The very long "kitchen sink" of possibilities gave every possibility generated, many reflecting excellent "out of the box" thinking that went onto bulletin boards during Task Force discussions, knowing that all could not be a priority or were not realistic. The draft begins with "collecting robust data and analyzing and sharing that data", which is what the Task Force has been doing for the past year.

Date of Approval: February 1, 2016

Record of the vote: 5 For (Commissioners Rossmo, Gonzales, Haley, Levy, Holt and Scruggs)
2 Against (Commissioners Worsham and Webber) with 3 board members absent
(Commissioners John Hernandez, Daniela Nunez, and Emmanuel Loo)

Attest:



(Staff or board member can sign)