

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: JANUARY 18, 2017
TO: MEMBERS OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
FROM: CARRIE SANDERS, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, T&ES
SUBJECT: AGENDA ITEM # 4 – VISION ZERO POLICY

ISSUE: Consideration of Vision Zero Policy for the City of Alexandria to achieve zero traffic deaths and serious injuries on Alexandria streets by 2028.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends the following:

1. That the Commission receive an update on the proposed Vision Zero Policy Resolution (attachment 1), and hold a public hearing;
2. That the Transportation Commission, following the public hearing, provide a recommendation to the City Council to adopt the Vision Zero Policy Resolution (attachment 2).

BACKGROUND: Vision Zero is a multidisciplinary approach to rethinking traffic safety. It began in Sweden in 1997 and has since been adopted with success by other countries and cities around the world. Vision Zero acknowledges that all traffic deaths and serious injuries are preventable and sets the goal of aggressively eliminating both in a set time frame with clear, measurable strategies. The Vision Zero initiative has been adopted by over 20 communities in the United States, including the District of Columbia and Montgomery County, Maryland. Vision Zero programs differ amongst communities in scale and approach but they all share the same aggressive timeline of eliminating of traffic deaths and serious injuries by making safety the primary objective of their transportation systems.

Traffic deaths and serious injuries are a public health issue in Alexandria. As of December 7, 2016, there have been four pedestrian deaths and 242 serious injuries this year, up from one death in 2015, zero in 2014, and two in 2013. The increase in traffic deaths and serious injuries in Alexandria mirrors the national trend. In 2015, there were over 35,000 traffic deaths in the United States, up 7.2 percent from 2014 after a decade long decline and the largest single-year increase since 1966. Experts at the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)

cite the significant increase in the total vehicle miles traveled (VMT) nationally and distracted driving as the source of this recent upward trend in traffic deaths and injuries.

In April 2016, the City adopted an amendment to the Transportation Master Plan (Pedestrian and Bicycle Chapter) that includes a high priority strategy to evaluate traffic deaths and develop a Vision Zero program that outlines the framework, budget and staffing needed to work towards eliminating pedestrian and bicycle related deaths and serious injuries in Alexandria. The goal of eliminating traffic deaths and serious injuries in Alexandria also aligns with the City's Strategic Goal of *protecting the safety, health and security of its residents, businesses, employees and visitors* and its Transportation Master Plan.

DISCUSSION: Since July 2016, City staff has met with the Vision Zero subcommittee of the Transportation Commission to develop a Vision Zero Policy resolution that would be appropriate for Alexandria. In fall 2016, City staff briefed the Commission on Aging, Public Health Advisory Commission, Alexandria City Public Schools Board, Traffic and Parking Board, Alexandria Commission on Persons with Disabilities, and Alexandria Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee on Vision Zero. The suggestions and recommendations of each respective committee have been incorporated into the Vision Zero resolution. In addition, letters of support have been provided by the Commission on Aging, Public Health Advisory Commission, and Alexandria Commission on Persons with Disabilities (attachment 3).

The Vision Policy Resolution will be presented to the City Council for their consideration for adoption on January 24, 2017. Upon adoption of the Vision Zero policy resolution, an interdepartmental working group will be formed to develop and implement a Vision Zero Action Plan, based upon a comprehensive analysis of traffic deaths and injuries in Alexandria. The Action Plan will identify specific measures, priorities and implementation, and associated funding needed for the City to reach the goal of zero deaths and serious injuries by 2028. Public engagement and community outreach will also be an essential aspect of the development and implementation of the Action Plan.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: Draft Resolution

Attachment 2: Draft Letter from Transportation Commission

Attachment 3: Letters of Supports from Boards & Commissions