

PBOT

PORTLAND BUREAU OF TRANSPORTATION

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Dan Saltzman Commissioner **Leah Treat** Director

June 6, 2017

Chair Deborah Kafoury
Multnomah County
501 SE Hawthorne Blvd, Suite 600
Portland, OR 97214

Dear Chair Kafoury,

Over the last 20 years, an average of 36 people died in traffic crashes annually on Portland streets. In 2016, 44 people lost their lives, the highest number of fatalities since 2003. Unintentional injuries, including those from traffic crashes, are the third leading cause of death in Multnomah County, and the leading cause of death for young people ages 1-44. Traffic deaths are preventable, and unsafe conditions create a barrier to healthy behaviors such as walking and biking.

Facing this public health crisis, there are many aspects of Vision Zero that could be tackled through collaboration between our agencies. Following are six specific action areas that we would like to accomplish in the next two years and that would greatly benefit from joint partnership.

Data Analysis

Analyze Oregon Trauma Registry data to supplement gaps in Traffic Crash Data such as race/ethnicity, injuries not involving motor vehicles, and under-reported traffic injury areas of Portland. (Vision Zero Action: Education and Accountability #4)

The Vision Zero Action Plan has relied heavily on ODOT traffic crash data to identify Portland's most dangerous streets and the most dangerous behaviors contributing to traffic deaths and serious injuries. However, we recognize that traffic crash data is incomplete in some specific ways:

- Limited information on race and ethnicity.
- No information on injuries or deaths of pedestrians or bicyclists when motor vehicles are not involved (like a bicyclist crashing on a train track).
- Traffic injury crashes likely are not uniformly reported across Portland.



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The Oregon Trauma Registry (OTR) is another source of traffic injury data that may be able to fill some of the identified data gaps. Given your staff expertise in health data analysis, we would be very interested in your assistance to secure OTR data, identify the study questions and methodology, and lead the data analysis. In 2016 PBOT did a preliminary analysis of the OTR data, which would provide a robust starting point.

Behavior Change

Review and make recommendations to improve existing traffic schools (i.e. diversion classes) and assist in creating a new traffic class for Portland's speed safety camera program. (Vision Zero Action: Dangerous Behavior #4)

We strive to improve the existing traffic school classes (i.e. diversion classes) that we offer in partnership with Portland Police, Trauma Nurses Talk Tough, and Multnomah County Circuit Court. The traffic schools provide an opportunity for those who have been cited for unlawful behavior while driving, bicycling or walking to participate in an educational class to waive or reduce the citation amount. Offering traffic school as an alternative to paying a fine is an important part of Portland's commitment to equity. The traffic classes receive high praise from attendees, but they would benefit tremendously from a behavioral change expert evaluating both content and content delivery for maximum impact to the audience.

Additionally, Portland recently launched a speed safety camera program. Portland is installing speed safety cameras on four high crash streets in 2016 and 2017. We have committed to developing a traffic class specific for speed camera citations. The findings and recommendations for existing traffic school classes would inform the development of a new speed safety camera driver education class.

Education and Outreach

Develop Vision Zero messaging that frames traffic violence from a public health perspective, is paired with other street changes and effectively engages the target audiences. (Vision Zero Actions: Education and Accountability #1 and #2)

Forty-four people died moving about on Portland streets in 2016, the highest number of fatalities since 2003. Unintentional injuries, including those from traffic crashes, are the third leading cause of death in Multnomah County, and the leading cause of death for young people ages 1-44. Multnomah County Health Department staff could play a critical role in framing the traffic violence as a public health epidemic – identifying data to support this assertion and developing ways of talking about the epidemic that resonate with Portlanders.

In addition, MCHD and PBOT staff could partner to develop messaging and programming for targeted outreach efforts that are combined with street design changes, speed reduction and photo enforcement. Two examples of targeted outreach opportunities to specific groups:

- PBOT is working with community groups in East Portland to develop multi-lingual, multi-cultural traffic safety outreach programs, targeting groups impacted by streets on the High Crash Network, and in combination with safety infrastructure projects, posted speed reduction and photo enforcement.
- We know that male drivers ages 20-50 are disproportionately responsible for the most serious crashes on Portland streets. Targeted messaging will be important to raise awareness and change behavior of this group, and can be developed in conjunction with two emerging DUII prevention programs

In these two very different target groups, PBOT and MCHD staff could work together with appropriate community partners to develop targeted health and traffic safety messaging.

Evaluation

Develop ways to evaluate effectiveness of identified Vision Zero actions.

The Vision Zero Action Plan contains 32 priority actions. The impact of some actions will be relatively easy to measure. For example, it will be easy to measure the impact that speed safety cameras have on both speed and serious crashes on segments of high crash streets where they are installed. The impact of other actions, however, will be much more difficult to measure. MCHD staff could help develop an evaluation process for one or more specific actions. Here are some example actions that we would like to be able to measure the effectiveness of upon implementation.

- A new DUII prevention program in the downtown core on Friday and Saturday nights, in partnership with private-for-hire car-sharing companies (like taxis, Uber and Lyft).
- New safe driver training for private-for-hire drivers.
- Street team outreach and other targeted outreach; measuring the impact on attitudes and behaviors of street users.

Street Design

Integrate Vision Zero design standards with transportation infrastructure projects. (Vision Zero Actions: Street Design #1 and Speed #3)

Two fundamental tenants of Vision Zero are 1) to slow speeds so that people moving by different modes (walking, biking, driving, taking transit) can safely mix without risk of death or serious injury, or 2) to separate people using different modes so that the unprotected road users (people walking and cycling) are physically buffered from threat of death or serious injury.

Multnomah County Transportation Division has been a leader incorporating the physical separation of different modes on the Morrison Bridge, with the multi-use path on the south side, and on the Hawthorne Bridge, with the conversion of one motor vehicle lane to a separated bike lane and expanded sidewalk.

PBOT is eager to continue working with Multnomah County to implement additional Vision Zero designs as opportunities arise, such as on the Burnside Bridge, and on multi-jurisdictional High Crash Network streets in East Portland.

Safe Routes to School

Collaborate to provide Safe Routes to School programming in East Portland and East Multnomah County school districts, including David Douglas, Parkrose, Centennial and Reynolds. (Vision Zero Action: Education & Accountability #3)

Vision Zero calls for developing targeted engagement with middle and high school students that is focused on traffic safety and in Communities of Concern. With a focus on school districts in East Portland and East Multnomah County, we could build a strong partnership between our Safe Routes to School team and Multnomah County staff to empower youth leadership to promote traffic safety among peers. Teens and pre-teens are an important focus group as they have growing mobility independence and are emerging drivers.

In conclusion, we are eager to move aggressively toward implementing a suite of actions that will achieve safer streets in Portland. Multnomah County leadership and staff have been key voices in shaping the Vision Zero Action Plan. I look forward to identifying specific ways that our jurisdictions can partner on implementation of this critical plan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dan Saltzman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dan Saltzman, Commissioner
City of Portland