



BikeLoudPDX

To: Mayor and Commissioners
Re: Draft Vision Zero Plan
From: BikeLoudPDX

cc: Timur Ender, Leah Treat, Roger Geller, Margi Bradway

BikeLoudPDX wholeheartedly supports Vision Zero and applauds Portland for committing to the elimination of traffic deaths. However, we have some comments on and concerns about the current draft plan. We request that PBOT and the Vision Zero Panel consider the following suggestions:

Major concerns:

The Vision Zero plan acknowledges equity as an essential component of Vision Zero but does not detail how bias and profiling will be reduced in the context of enforcement actions. Although we support funding of additional “Drug Recognition Experts” in police agencies and an emphasis on safety enforcement in “high crash corridors”, we believe the Vision Zero draft should detail policies and technologies that increase transparency and reduce potential for bias and violent escalation. BikeLoudPDX also strongly supports the use of speed and red light cameras but believes a diversion program for lower-income people is needed to reduce the potential for bias.

Successful funding of Vision Zero infrastructure and reforms is essential to its success. Funding estimates for full implementation and a list of potential funding mechanisms/sources should be included. In particular, the draft should outline funding sources for 2 year actions.

BikeLoudPDX would like to see the scope of the “fatal rapid response team” (item SD3) expanded to include both serious injuries and fatal collisions. For vulnerable road users, the difference between a serious injury and a fatality is a very fine line. To prevent fatalities in the future, it is essential the PBOT and the PPB investigate, record, and study factors contributing to serious injury collisions.

The existing process for reporting safety concern currently takes up to 16 weeks (cited by PBOT on their website) for a response. The draft Vision Zero Proposal should describe steps to improve this response time to less than a month. We also request that the city publish safety reports/queries and the city’s response to them.

We propose the creation of a streamlined design process where citizen volunteers could propose the installation of cost-effective semi-permanent and/or temporary test treatments. This

process could combine aspects of SD4, SD5, and EA2 with "Better Block" style quick installations, so that enhanced crossings, bus islands, and bikeway/walkway protection could be deployed quickly and cheaply. This new process would potentially allow safety concerns to be addressed within weeks or months and would provide "proof of principle" for funding applications.

Definitions in law and rules need to better address the gap between posted speed and actual speed, and proportional thresholds would do that. Speeds of 5 or 10 mph over 20 will double or quadruple the chance of death or severe injury, but the performance measure (S3) lists 5 mph as a threshold and speed cameras will allow 10mph over. BikeLoudPDX calls for a ~5% speed limit threshold for both road design and automated enforcement. Furthermore, efforts to redefine state law's speeding violation classes in terms of percentages of posted speeds should be part of the long-term actions.

BikeLoudPDX agrees that the Vision Zero plan should "de-emphasize less serious infractions" and emphasize infractions that are most likely to result in serious injury or death. Because infractions by people walking or cycling rarely result in injury or death, the draft Vision Zero plan should contain language that de-emphasizes infractions by vulnerable traffic (that do not pose risk to others).

The current draft plan lists 2 year actions and longer term actions but does not list any immediate actions that can be taken. We urge the City of Portland to follow New York City's lead and describe improvements that can be implemented in the first year.

"Prioritize safety criteria in federal, state, regional, and local funding decision-making processes
"Gain local authority for speed reduction on City of Portland streets; prioritize setting safe speed limits in the High Crash Network"
Safety funding and increased local authority for infrastructure design are critical for implementation of Vision Zero. The plan should detail actions the City could take to obtain this authority.

"Develop and implement safety measures on heavy trucks owned or contracted by the City of Portland, including but not limited to truck sideguards, sensors, additional mirrors, educational messaging, and enhanced driver safety training. "

BikeLoudPDX calls on the City of Portland to work with ODOT and/or the legislature to implement these important safety measures for all heavy trucks in the Portland area.

Minor concerns:

A graphic in the draft plan lists "Person's clothing not visible" as a causal factor in fatal collisions.

People walking or biking should not be blamed for being injured or killed because they were wearing supposedly inappropriate (also known as “normal”) clothing. We urge that this language be removed from the final proposal.

A graphic in the draft plan lists “Person illegally in roadway” as a causal factor in fatal collisions. Vision Zero principles emphasize design that reduces fatalities and serious injuries even when vulnerable road users make mistakes. This language is contrary to Vision Zero principles and we urge its removal.

“In a city where people walking make up a disproportionate number of traffic deaths, slowing speeds is critical. Getting there will take a suite of policy, infrastructure, education, and enforcement actions.”

These policy, infrastructure, education, and enforcement actions should be described in the Vision Zero plan.

“Deploy a multi-agency fatal rapid response team to all fatal crash locations to evaluate the site for safety enhancements”

The agencies and their roles and responsibilities should be listed.

Sincerely,

Emily Guise, BikeLoudPDX Co-Chair

Ted Buehler, BikeLoudPDX Co-Chair

Soren Impey, BikeLoudPDX Board Member and Direct Action Coordinator