



Legislation Text

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

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MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** JANUARY 18, 2017

**TO:** THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** MARK B. JINKS, CITY MANAGER /s/

**DOCKET TITLE:**

Consideration of a Resolution Endorsing the Vision Zero Concept and Instructing the City Manager to Develop an Action Plan for Future Consideration by Council. [ROLL-CALL VOTE]

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**ISSUE:** Consideration of a resolution endorsing the Vision Zero concept and instructing the City Manager to develop a Vision Zero Action Plan.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That City Council adopt the Vision Zero resolution (Attachment 1).

**BACKGROUND:** Vision Zero is a multidisciplinary, multi-national traffic safety concept that aims to achieve a transportation system that results in no deaths or serious injuries. It began in Sweden in 1997 and has since been adopted by other countries and cities around the world. The Vision Zero concept proposes that adopting communities recognize that traffic deaths and serious injuries are preventable, and are not accidents. Thus, when communities adopt Vision Zero programs they are, in effect, rethinking traffic safety and setting aggressive timelines to eliminate traffic deaths and serious injuries.

The policy impact and considerations of adopting a Vision Zero program would include:

- Establishing (as a framework for future City policy) safety as the primary goal of the City's transportation network
- Complementing and building on existing City programs and initiatives such as Complete Streets
- Use of a data-driven approach to enable the City to focus finite resources on problematic locations and behaviors

**DISCUSSION:** Vision Zero initiatives have 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 some common elements including aggressive timelines to

eliminate traffic deaths/serious injuries and the use of data-driven approaches to set strategic and measurable goals.

Traffic deaths and serious injuries have been identified as a public health issue in Alexandria. As of December 7, 2016, there have been four pedestrian deaths and 242 traffic-related injuries in 2016, up from one death in 2015, zero in 2014, and two in 2013. The increase in traffic deaths and serious injuries in Alexandria mirrors a 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. The year-over-year increase from 2014 to 2015 is the largest single-year increase since 1966. Experts at the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) cite a significant increase in the total vehicle miles traveled (VMT) nationally and distracted driving as primary sources 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 strategy to evaluate traffic deaths and develop a Vision Zero program that outlines an action plan framework and necessary resources. 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*.

Upon Council adoption of the Master Plan amendment, the Transportation Commission established a Vision Zero subcommittee to develop a Vision Zero policy resolution appropriate for Alexandria. In the fall of 2016, City staff briefed the Commission on Aging, Public Health Advisory Commission, Alexandria City Public School's School 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. The full Transportation Commission on January 18 also held a public hearing on the Vision Zero resolution and has provided a letter (Attachment 2).

If Council adopts the Vision Zero policy resolution, an interdepartmental working group will be formed to develop and start implementing 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. The intent of the Action Plan would be to incorporate any resource needs for consideration in the FY 2019 budget.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** Staff estimates the cost to develop the Vision Zero Action Plan will be approximately \$50,000 which will be covered from the existing Complete Streets budget. Any future funding needed to implement the strategies identified in a Vision Zero Action Plan would require future consideration and approval by Council as part of annual operating budget and Capital Improvement Program (CIP) considerations. Potential items may include new capital projects and funding to supplement existing programs and departmental budgets, but would also consist to the degree possible of non-City sources, such as federal and state grants and contributions from sponsors and organizations. Vision Zero budget initiatives whether operating or capital will need to compete for funding along with other City programs and projects.

#### **ATTACHMENTS:**

Attachment 1: Resolution

Attachment 2: Transportation Commission letter

Attachment 3: Presentation

**STAFF:**

Emily A. Baker, Deputy City Manager

Yon Lambert, Director, T&ES

David Huchler, Acting Chief of Police

Carrie Sanders, Deputy Director/Transportation, T&ES