

MEMO

TO: NWARPC/Policy Committee
FROM: Elizabeth Bowen, Project Manager
DATE: June 28, 2023
SUBJECT: Safe Streets and Roads For All (SS4A) – Regional “Vision Zero” Comprehensive Safety Action Plan (CSAP)

The DRAFT Safe Streets and Roads For All (SS4A) – Regional “Vision Zero” Comprehensive Safety Action Plan (CSAP) has been developed by Toole Design Group to assist the Region in reducing fatalities and serious injuries on our transportation network. The two-week public comment period was held from Monday, June 5, 2023 through Monday, June 19, 2023 with written comments to be sent to comments@nwarpc.org. The draft plan and public comments were considered by the TAC on June 15, 2023. The draft Plan and additional information about the process can be found at <https://www.nwarpc.org/transportation/vision-zero-plan/>.

Below are the comments received to date for your review.

Summary of Comments - Trailblazers - David Criswell

Page: i

If this project has a 15-year vision, we need to have an active dashboard that is updated regularly that people reference for progress.

A safety analysis needs to be performed for intersections. Cities need to be able to prioritize unsafe intersections, know the most common crash type, and have a list of countermeasures they can consider.

Page: 14

Trailblazers

Trailblazers

Page: 18

Did it identify and prioritize investment opportunities?

Page: 39

Provide safe routes through construction for vulnerable road users.

Example: Moberly & 8th St ped heads have been disabled at an active intersection for over a year in Bentonville, AR.

Page: 42

"Eliminate dual center turn lanes" or "Elimination of dual center turn lanes"

Page: 43

Separation

Construct roundabouts? (reduced conflict points compared to traditional four-way)

Elizabeth,

Great job on your Vision Zero Plan. I just have a few suggestions:

- Address the role of utilizing Access Management regulations (specifically the number, location and design of curb cuts.) as a tool to address traffic and pedestrian accidents within high activity corridors. In a recent planning effort along the 71B Corridor in Fayetteville we found some evidence that there was a strong correlation between the number of curb cuts and the number of traffic accidents along specific sections of the corridor.
- Establish local education programs where annually local Staff and Officials (Planners, Building Inspectors, Planning Commissioners and City Council Representatives) involved in Planning and Land Use Policy implementation are made aware of the Vision Zero Plan Goals and Action Items, including their integration into policy actions (i.e., zoning, subdivision development, etc.).
- You might want to also discuss the important role Transit (rail and bus) can play in reducing traffic accidents through reduction of traffic volumes and the segregation of public transportation and ride-share vehicles from single occupancy vehicles.

Thank you for your efforts to improve the safety of our Region's streets and pedestrian ways.

Thomas Brown

Good morning!

I am looking over the Vision Zero project and had a quick question. On page 38, why is "902% (105) Lack of safe places to bike and/or roll" listed twice on the chart? Also, it doesn't appear to add up to 100%.

Great report overall!

Baylea Birchfield
Planner, City of Bentonville



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June 8, 2023

Elizabeth Bowen
Project Manager/Regional Planner
NWA Regional Planning Commission
1311 Clayton St
Springdale, AR 72764

Thank you for the opportunity to review the draft Vision Zero Plan for NWA. This is an exciting step toward safety for our region. The plan is great as is, these comments by Bentonville Planning are made in an effort to keep the document dynamic after adoption, feel free to use or lose!

Under Goals and Actions:

Action Item A.2 *seeks to increase frequency speed and service area for public transportation.* There are challenges to transit based on the current structure of the funding wherein each City funds operations within their jurisdiction. Trips typically originate in one jurisdiction and end in another and transit planning is best done without regard to jurisdiction. If the structure of the transit funding was less siloed we could better achieve a larger service area. An additional action item could suggest a minimum per capita funding amount for member agencies so that we all contribute equally to solving this regional issue.

Action Item A.5 *the action item seeks to better report out crash circumstances.* An additional action item could be to connect that data to the public with a NWA Regional Planning Commission GIS layer so that engineers and planners working on roadway plans could better understand areas that need to be corrected. The High Injury Network and the equity map could also be served up on a GIS layer for finer grain detail.

Action Item A.7 and A.8 *the action items seek to reduce VMT through better land use, street design and policies.* An additional action item could be for the NWA Regional Planning Commission to report out for each member agency the VMT per capita to develop a trend line as we head towards 2038. This will showcase those member agencies that are adopting the right policies, land uses and roadway networks and guide others that need to make course corrections. There are VMT aggregators that sell such data such as: [Find My VMT - Fehr & Peers \(febrandpeers.com\)](https://febrandpeers.com/)

Action Item A.13 *the action item seeks to conduct safety audits after every fatality.* An additionally action item may be to offer walking audits for member agencies prior to every new roadway design to ensure they are scoped properly at the inception. We have recently created the NWA Chapter for the Association for Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals, a group of professionals who are willing to lead walking audits for member agencies or for any community that believes there is an unsafe design. A walking audit toolkit can be found at AARP.org/WalkAudit.



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Finally, we suggest including a model Complete Streets Policy so that member agencies can begin with a framework and easily craft their own policy (attached).

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed draft of the Vision Zero NWA Safety Action plan. If you need any further information I can be reached at (479) 271-3198 or tadler@bentonvillear.com

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tom Adler".

Tom Adler
Current Planning Manager

Fayetteville Active Transportation Advisory Committee

All-in-all this is a really good plan. I have noticed a just a few items that should be addressed:

1. There are several mentions of speed limit reductions as a safety measure. According to a study from the NHTSA, every 5 MPH of limit reduction yields only 1-2 MPH of actual speed reduction. This would mean that reducing a 35 MPH road to 20 MPH might reduce driver speeds from 40 MPH to 35 MPH. That doesn't make much of a change in terms of safety. It really only acts to boost citation revenue for the police department. One might argue that every little bit counts. Unfortunately, when an easy solution is offered to a municipality, its efficacy is often under-considered before simply implementing the change and touting efforts towards progress. This is likely to undermine the more difficult, expensive, controversial, and time-consuming strategies that have been shown to be much more effective, such as road diets and traffic calming measures. It would be good if Chapter 4: Section 4: Slow Vehicle Speeds speed limit measures were deprioritized in favor of the reduction of lane and roadway widths (preferably 10' lanes) and the introduction of traffic calming measures). Speed limits can then be lowered in conjunction with this to match the street design.
2. Relating to my previous comment, there is no mention of street trees, only a tactic of "provide buffers to sidewalks". Myriad studies display the effectiveness of street trees at traffic calming. They also provide a protective barrier between the roadway and bike lanes/sidewalks (depending upon where they are placed). They also have the added benefit of beautifying street fronts, increasing property values, alternative transit mode use, and customer base for businesses through improved interaction.
3. Another measure that I didn't see mentioned is the reduction of intersection radii. This is another proven strategy that reduces turning speed and shortens crosswalk distances. I understand that these are usually governed by emergency vehicle turning radii, but there are ways to design intersections to allow that turning radius for emergency vehicles only.
4. It would be good to see "shifting right-of-way to trail occupants" at all trail/roadway crossings. This is not officially the case now, but it is in practice. It would be good to see that clarified.

That's all I have right now. Thanks for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Trey

ARDOT Transportation Planning & Policy Division

The Transportation Planning and Policy Division appreciates the opportunity to participate in the development of the NWARPC's Safety Action Plan. Safety is *first* among ArDOT's Core Values (Safety, Trust, Excellence, Accountability, and Modern), and we commend the NWARPC's commitment to Vision Zero, which aligns with our Toward Zero Deaths commitment in the Strategic Highway Safety Plan.

Regarding the proposed Actions identifying ArDOT as an Action Leader (Chapter 4), we offer the following general observations:

- Many of the Actions are consistent with ArDOT's current plans and practices. Examples include adopting a Complete Streets Policy, installing pedestrian countdown signals in new construction, and using bicycle-friendly edge line rumble strips.
- Some Actions reflect practices that are acceptable to ArDOT, but are implemented on a case-by-case basis, rather than as a standard practice. Examples include the use of leading pedestrian intervals and protected-only phasing.
- Related to the previous case, some of the proposed Actions are acceptable to ArDOT, but are typically implemented by permit or through a partnering arrangement, consistent with our established policies and practices. Examples include construction of shared use paths, installation of roadway lighting, and construction of tunnels/overpasses for trails.
- Several of the Actions represent steps that are acknowledged to be desirable, but are beyond current staff or programmatic resources. Examples include conducting a roadway safety audit for all fatal crashes (which is beyond the capacity of our current traffic safety staff) and closing all sidewalk gaps (for which ArDOT provides funding through the TAP program).
- Finally, as discussed during our calls on June 15 and June 16, some of the Actions could benefit from clarification or other revision. Examples include B.1 (Why is this limited to State Highways? Does "distances between crossings" refer to legal crosswalks, painted crosswalks, signalized crossings, or something else?), B.11 (in reference to "dual center turn lanes"), and B.20 (in reference to "daylighting," which may not be a familiar term).

To acknowledge the limits on each agency's ability to implement these actions, we propose including a general disclaimer (similar to the disclaimer on the inside front cover) in Chapter 4 (probably on pages 34 or 35). Something like:

The Actions that follow are understood to be general recommendations. For some Actions, implementation would only occur when and where appropriate based on further analysis, engineering design, and environmental assessment. Other Actions may require policy changes in alignment with other agency goals. Due to staffing, financial, and other constraints, each agency will need to consider how to prioritize implementation of these Actions in support of Vision Zero.

Please let me know if you see something you would like to discuss further.

Thanks,
Travis