

March 14, 2019



Honorable Mayor London Breed  
City of San Francisco

Norman Yee  
President, Board of Supervisors  
Chair, SFCTA Vision Zero Committee

Director Ed Reiskin  
SF Municipal Transportation Agency

Chief Bill Scott  
San Francisco Police Department

Director Grant Colfax  
SF Department of Public Health

Director Deborah Raphael  
SF Department of the Environment

Director Tilly Chang  
SF County Transportation Authority

Director Nicole Bohn  
Mayor's Office on Disability

Director Mohammed Nuru  
SF Public Works

Director John Rahaim  
SF Planning

City Administrator Naomi Kelly  
Office of the City Administrator

Dear Mayor Breed, Board President Yee, Director Reiskin, Chief Scott, Director Colfax, Director Raphael, Director Chang, Director Bohn, Director Nuru, Director Rahaim, and City Administrator Kelly,

**We are writing in response to the City's latest Vision Zero Action Strategy, released on February 28.** In light of the recent rash of traffic deaths in San Francisco, and with only five years left to reach our goal of zero deaths, the City's work on Vision Zero is more important than ever.

First, we want to thank Mayor Breed for her deep commitment to Vision Zero and the swift action she has taken to make our streets safer. From ensuring the prioritization of infrastructure projects like Valencia and Taylor Streets, to the recent directive that includes the rapid improvement of all high-injury corridors, Mayor Breed is taking bold steps to lead the City's Vision Zero work. Such leadership is crucial when our deadline is five years away.

We also want to recognize the many City agencies who have put in years of hard work and dedication toward enacting important Vision Zero policies, projects, and programs. In particular, we want to thank the SFMTA and SFDPH for cochairing the Vision Zero Task Force and spearheading so many of the City's Vision Zero efforts.

Finally, we thank the City for its extensive Vision Zero outreach over the past two years, as well as for including 5-year goals in the current Action Strategy. The Vision Zero Coalition requested both of these actions after the release of the last Strategy, and we appreciate the City's responsiveness.

This Action Strategy has many of the components needed to make a strong plan. It mentions important big-picture policies — both local and statewide — whose implementation is

necessary to reach zero. It also includes 58 actions, both big and small, that the City is committing to take between now and 2024.

Nevertheless, a list of policies and actions is not a strategy or a roadmap to get us to zero. It is unclear from this Strategy exactly how the City plans to get the transformative policies passed, how it plans to reach the complementary City goals listed, and what impact the 58 actions will have. Also, the plan doesn't give any sense of whether these policies and actions, if implemented, will have the desired impact by 2024.

In addition, the Strategy lacks specific actions to improve Muni, improvements which are needed for us to reach zero, since transit-robust cities have fewer crashes and most major Muni corridors are on the high-injury network.

Without providing a clear roadmap to zero and without a laser focus on improving transit and increasing ridership, we fear the Strategy will not guide the City to reaching its ambitious goal of zero severe and fatal traffic crashes by 2024.

**The Vision Zero Coalition would like the City to swiftly address the concerns we have with the latest Vision Zero Action Strategy, which are outlined in greater detail below.**

## **No Mention of Progress to Date**

We are five years into Vision Zero, with only five years left to reach our goal. Nevertheless, this Strategy does not include any mention of progress to date, except in one paragraph in the "Note from the Mayor." There is no update on the actions and metrics from the previous two Strategies, which leaves the City completely unaccountable and leaves us with little faith in the current Strategy.

## **Transit and Mode Shift Goals Are Central to Vision Zero, Not Complementary**

We are pleased to see the City list SFMTA's Transit First Policy explicitly in the Action Strategy, with a clear acknowledgement that "A strong public transit system is critical to realize Vision Zero and shift people out of their cars."

According to the American Public Transportation Association, using public transportation is ten times safer per mile than traveling by car. In addition, metro areas with higher public transportation use have lower traffic fatality rates.

Two other complementary City goals in this section — the Mode Shift goal and the Climate Action goal — are reliant on the City's ability to provide a frequent, reliable transit system. We will not reach 80% of trips by sustainable modes by 2030 without a robust transit system, and the same is true of our goal to reduce transportation emissions by 80%.

It is misleading to list these goals as complementary, especially the Mode Shift goal and the Transit First goal, because they are critical to reaching Vision Zero. **Instead, the Transit First and Mode Shift goals should be included in this document as primary Vision Zero strategies with measurable actions and outcomes that will help us get to zero by 2024.**

The agencies and City departments responsible for these initiatives — like the Muni team at the SFMTA — should be helping lead the City's Vision Zero work. Until that happens, the City will just be putting band-aids on a transportation system comprised of too many private vehicles that are injuring and killing pedestrians and bicyclists.

## **Transformative Policies Are Vital, But Difficult to Achieve by 2024** ***They also lack ownership and S.M.A.R.T. actions***

Naming larger policies needed to reach Vision Zero is important, and the Coalition has lent its support to state policies like automated speed enforcement and will continue to do so. At the same time, the Action Strategy does not mention that each of these transformative policies will be extremely difficult to realize by any future date, let alone before or by 2024. Most are dependent on state legislation and therefore not within the control of the City.

Suggesting that these policies are necessary for the City to reach Vision Zero, but not mentioning the timeframe or likelihood of these being enacted, absolves the City of what actions it must take to reach zero between now and 2024 in the absence of these policies.

In addition, the Strategy does not clearly list which agency is responsible for working towards enactment of each of these transformative policies or what Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-oriented (S.M.A.R.T.) local actions will be undertaken to push these state policies forward.

## **It's Unclear Whether the Strategic Actions Are Strategic** ***Also, most are not S.M.A.R.T.***

It's encouraging to see the City commit to taking 58 separate actions as part of its Vision Zero work. At the same time, a list of 58 actions is not a strategy. It is a compilation of all the actions that eight agencies are taking related to traffic safety, but it doesn't mean there is an overall Plan behind the list or any evidence that this combination of actions will get us to zero. There is no indication what the high-impact actions are and what the supporting actions are. There is no indication of how many of the actions are high-impact or what evidence is used to prove the efficacy of the various actions. In conclusion, there is no evidence of a coordinated, strategic plan to reach zero.

In addition, for actions to have real impact, they should be S.M.A.R.T. — Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-oriented. The actions in the last Action Strategy were not S.M.A.R.T. and, unfortunately, the same critique applies to many of the actions in the current Strategy. Several examples include:

Action	Is it S.M.A.R.T.?
Increase the total miles of high-impact sustainable travel lanes — transit-only lanes, protected bicycle facilities, and wider sidewalks — by 8 miles annually to improve safety for sustainable modes.	Not specific. The number of miles should be broken down by mode.
Reduce delivery timelines for 6th Street and Taylor Street projects.	Not specific. How much will the delivery timelines be reduced by?
Complete near-term improvements — signal timing and intersection crossing upgrades — at all intersections on the Vision Zero High-Injury Network. This includes retiming all High-Injury Network signals for slower walking speeds.	Not specific enough. What specific improvements are planned for what intersections?
Train outreach street team on culturally competent outreach to vulnerable populations.	Hard to measure
Share city accomplishments through press releases and social media.	Hard to measure
Explore additional collision avoidance technologies for SFMTA city fleet.	Not specific and hard to measure

## Severe Injuries Missing from Metrics

Five hundred people are severely injured in traffic crashes every year in San Francisco, and yet the new Action Strategy doesn't list the number of severe injuries as a metric. This is a missed opportunity to measure the City's progress toward Vision Zero.

## Actions We Are Asking For<sup>1</sup>

- **Transit / Mode Shift Plans and Staffing**

The Coalition would like the City to make transit and mode shift major Vision Zero strategies through the following actions:

1. The SFMTA should commit to specific Muni service improvements, with the goal of increased ridership, as a Vision Zero strategy. The agency should create a plan by August 2019 that states specific goals for Muni service expansion, on-time performance, and ensuring an adequate operator pool as well as specific actions they will take to achieve these goals. Priorities for service expansion should support the Muni Equity Strategy.

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<sup>1</sup> The Senior & Disability Workgroup of the Vision Zero Coalition will submit a separate letter outlining concerns and questions related to Action Strategy content around seniors and people with disabilities. Those concerns were not finalized by the date of this letter's publication.

2. To successfully deliver transit improvements, the SFMTA should significantly increase staffing in the Transit Planning group. Perpetual understaffing of this group has meant the City has not had the resources to improve high-injury corridors, increase service, and spend down the \$500 million Prop A bond money approved by voters. To reach Vision Zero, the Transit Planning group must have at least 6-8 projects in the planning and outreach phases at a single time, and we are asking for a staffing increase that allows this level of project delivery.
3. SFMTA’s Muni Team should play a major role in the City’s Vision Zero Steering Committee and should attend quarterly Vision Zero Task Force and Vision Zero Committee meetings.
4. Other agencies leading the City’s work to achieve 80% of trips by sustainable modes by 2030 (e.g., SF Department of the Environment, SF Planning) should clearly outline the City’s overall plan to meet this goal and explain how the plan is specifically being used as a Vision Zero strategy (by August 2019).

- **More Details Regarding Transformative Policies**

For the four Transformative Policies listed in the Action Strategy, the Coalition would like the City to report:

1. What agencies are responsible for each of the policies
2. What the detailed plan is to get those policies adopted and implemented in San Francisco

- **Severe Injuries as a Metric**

The Coalition would like the City to explicitly include the number of severe injuries as a Vision Zero metric.

- **New Vision Zero “Strategic Actions”**

The Vision Zero Coalition would like the City to add the following actions to the Action Strategy:

New Action	Lead Agency	Reasoning
1. Release a quarterly report on Focus on the Five traffic citations by race/ethnicity (immediately)	SFPD	Vision Zero enforcement must not result in racial profiling; the public needs the data to hold SFPD accountable and ensure that Vision Zero is implemented equitably.

New Action	Lead Agency	Reasoning
2. Release an SFPD statement that Vision Zero enforcement will not result in racial profiling (immediately)	SFPD	SFPD has been found to stop and search black and brown communities at disproportionate rates. The City must commit to an equitable approach to Vision Zero so that communities aren't harmed by an approach that is supposed to be helping them.
3. Commit to the use of trained, culturally competent, multilingual outreach professionals in SFMTA's Sustainable Streets Division (SSD) at a level equal to other SFMTA divisions (2 years)	SFMTA	Skillful public outreach is vital to equitable implementation of safety improvements and to getting Vision Zero projects passed with minimal delays. All MTA divisions, especially the one that leads bike and pedestrian projects, should have a strong team of expert outreach workers.
4. Identify funding and resources needed to expand the Crisis Response Protocol to include critical injury crashes (1 year)	SFDPH	The Crisis Response Protocol is an amazing success for fatal crashes, and the 100 people critically injured each year should be afforded the same services.

- **Modified “Strategic Actions”**

The Vision Zero Coalition would like to see the following two actions modified, as indicated below.

1. In Action Strategy:

*Complete near-term improvements – signal timing and intersection crossing upgrades – at all intersections on the High Injury Network (5 years)*

Modification:

*Add this action:*

*Develop a detailed, publicly shared plan to install safety improvements on all high-injury corridors by 2024 that goes beyond high-visibility crosswalks and adherence to the new crossing time standard (1 year)*

2. In Action Strategy:

*Reduce delivery timelines through quick-build projects – work done entirely by City forces – on five corridors to advance short-term safety benefits at high priority corridors including Valencia and Townsend (2 years)*

Modifications:

- The Coalition asks the City to commit to implementing quick-build projects on the corridors below in the next two years, in addition to Valencia and Townsend. Each are located on high-injury corridors for which the community has shown strong support and which are not likely to see improvements in the next two years.

Leavenworth Street	Street identified by community as having high need; no project planned
Jones Street	Street with one of the highest concentrations of crashes in city; no project planned
Hyde Street	Street with one of the highest concentrations of crashes in city; grant application for long-term project submitted by City
7th Street	Important bicycle connector between SoMa, Caltrain and Mission Bay with no protection south of Folsom.
11th Street	Project has been long delayed (was scheduled to be approved in 2018 and built in 2019). Design has begun, and near-term solutions should be implemented.
Embarcadero near-term	This project has been delayed for years, and someone was killed on the corridor in 2018.
One corridor identified through the Bayview Community-Based Transportation Planning process	Few Bayview streets have received safety improvements since the City adopted Vision Zero, and more Bayview streets are on the new high-injury network map than the previous one.
California Street, from 18th Avenue to Arguello	One of the few high-injury corridors in the Richmond District that lacks a comprehensive improvement plan. Until a permanent project is implemented, this corridor needs short-term fixes.

The Vision Zero Coalition commends the substantial work the Mayor and City agencies have put into making the streets of San Francisco safer for everyone. We are confident that the City can reach its ambitious Vision Zero goal by 2024, but with only 5 years left, the City must pull out all the stops to get there, including implementing a strong transit plan.

We look forward to hearing how the City can implement the recommendations outlined above in order to successfully move forward its Vision Zero work.

Sincerely,

The Undersigned Vision Zero Coalition members

*California Alliance for Retired Americans (CARA)*  
*CC Puede*  
*Community Housing Partnership*  
*Chinatown TRIP*  
*East Cut Community Benefit District*  
*FDR Democratic Club of San Francisco*  
*Livable City*  
*Richmond Senior Center*  
*San Francisco Bicycle Coalition*  
*San Francisco Housing Action Coalition*  
*Safe Routes to School National Partnership, Northern California Region*  
*San Francisco Transit Riders*  
*Senior & Disability Action*  
*South Beach | Rincon | Mission Bay NA Board of Directors*  
*SPUR*  
*Tenderloin Community Benefit District – Safe Passage*  
*United Playaz*  
*Walk San Francisco*

cc: SF Board of Supervisors  
SFMTA Board of Directors  
District Attorney George Gascón  
Port Authority Director Elaine Forbes  
Fire Chief Joanne Hayes-White  
Rec and Park General Manager Phil Ginsburg  
SFUSD Superintendent Vincent Matthews  
SFPUC General Manager Harlan Kelly  
Senator Scott Wiener  
Assemblymember David Chiu  
Assemblymember Phil Ting