Cascade Bicycle Club is vigilantly pursuing zero bicyclist traffic deaths and serious injuries in the Puget Sound Region. We adopted Vision Zero as an objective in our Five-Year Strategic Plan.

**HISTORY & EVOLUTION**

The Swedish Parliament had a vision of eliminating all traffic-related fatalities and injuries among pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists alike. In 1997, Sweden’s Vision Zero safety bill passed and was written into law. Since enactment less than 20 years ago, fatalities have dropped more than 30%, giving Sweden one of the lowest road fatality rates in the world. This accomplishment illustrates that traffic collisions are preventable.¹

We’ve only just begun this work in the United States. Each year, more than 30,000 people are killed and thousands more injured on our streets. In 2014, there were 180 fatalities and 1,003 serious injuries in the Puget Sound region alone. Of the fatalities, 23% were pedestrians and 2% were bicyclists. Of those seriously injured, 20% were pedestrians and 6% were bicyclists.²

Historically, we’ve relied on education and enforcement to improve safety. But to achieve Vision Zero, we have to go further. We have to change our approach to street design.

By adopting Vision Zero, we have the power to prevent death and injury on city streets right here in our region.

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¹ Vision Zero Network [Data file]. Retrieved from visionzeroinitiative.com


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**What is Vision Zero?**

Vision Zero is an innovative and coordinated approach to traffic safety, with the ultimate goal of ending deaths and serious injuries.

**Cascade’s Position**

Everyone has the right to be safe, regardless of how they travel.
PHILOSOPHY

Vision Zero is a significant departure from the status quo. Transportation systems are traditionally designed for maximum capacity and the mobility of automobiles, not the safety of people. This means that vulnerable road users are held responsible for their own safety.

Vision Zero takes the opposite approach by placing the responsibility of safety on the design and engineering of the transportation system itself. It recognizes that we are human and we make mistakes. An effective road safety system is one that takes inevitable human factors into account.

VISION ZERO CORE VALUES

- All traffic deaths and severe injuries are preventable.
- No loss of life is acceptable.
- We are human and make mistakes.
- The road system must be designed to protect us at every turn.
- Safe mobility is a basic right for all people.

VISION ZERO IN THE U.S.

Vision Zero is still new but is catching on. Below in order are the six major U.S. cities that have adopted Vision Zero plans between 2012 to present:

- Chicago
- San Francisco
- New York City
- Seattle
- Portland
- San Jose

VISION ZERO IN THE PUGET SOUND REGION

Many Puget Sound cities are busy enacting Vision Zero as well. The list below is not comprehensive, but illustrates examples of great initiatives our Eastside neighbors are pursuing:

- **U.S. Representative Suzan DelBene (D-WA, 1):** Co-signed legislation allocating funds to local governments wishing to develop interagency Vision Zero plans.
- **Bellevue:** City Council unanimously passed a resolution endorsing Vision Zero, with the goal of achieving zero traffic deaths and serious injuries by 2030.
- **Kenmore:** Adopted Target Zero Initiative to eliminate all bicycle and pedestrian fatalities and serious injuries by 2025.
- **Kirkland:** Included a Vision Zero policy statement in its Comprehensive Plan update to eliminate all fatalities and serious injuries by 2035.
- **Seattle:** Adopted a Vision Zero Plan in 2015 to eliminate deaths and serious injuries by 2030. The recently adopted transportation levy, Move Seattle, funds Vision Zero projects.
“Caleb’s death was the tipping point for the City of Kenmore... It’s the government’s job to protect us. No matter what your job is, you have the responsibility to make change.”

— Ben Shoop, father of 19-year-old Caleb Shoop who was struck by a truck while biking across a crosswalk in 2014.

KEY VISION ZERO COMPONENTS

Cascade endorses the following components adapted in part from the Vision Zero Network. These are fundamental to the success of a Vision Zero plan:

1. **Lowering speed** has the most potential to improve safety and save the lives of vulnerable users. A driver’s field of vision decreases as speed increases. At slower speeds, drivers have more time to see their surroundings and react to potential hazards. The most successful countries and cities enacting Vision Zero have lowered speed limits. In fact, combining lower speeds with red light safety cameras have more potential to reduce injuries and collisions than police patrols and ticketing.³

This approach is illustrated by the following graphic on walking, but the same applies to bicycling:

![Graphic showing the impact of speed on pedestrian survival](image)

2. **Designing new streets for all modes and their respective speed** is crucial. People traveling at different speeds is a common source of conflict. Slowing everyone down and separating modes will create a safer experience for everyone. Planners and engineers must consider how bicyclists, pedestrians, and automobiles interact when developing street designs and policies. In areas where a mixture of road users are traveling at different speeds, the posted driving speed should be lowered as much as possible to ensure safety for all. If a collision occurs, survival is more likely when vehicle speed is at or below 20 mph (Shahum, 2015, para. 10).

3. Re-designing existing streets for the safety of all users is similarly essential. Introducing physical separation, such as protected bike lanes or buffered bike lanes, between cars and bicycles on roads with high traffic volumes and/or high speeds is critical. Adding separated bikeways can also increase pedestrian safety. For example, when installing a protected bike lane, you can also build a pedestrian refuge island and/or curb bulbs to shorten crossing distances (Shahum, 2015, para. 12-13).

4. Building partnerships is vital. Through our research and collaboration with the City of Seattle, Cascade recognizes that successfully adopting Vision Zero requires a broad coalition of partners. Vision Zero changes the approach to safety and requires new processes. The mayor, city council, city departments, and community leaders must organize under a unifying vision. A strong mandate should guide a system of coordination between government bodies, data sharing, accountability to quantifiable goals, and communication with diverse communities. Using stakeholder liaisons to engage seniors, immigrants, ethnic groups, school officials, bus operators, businesses and others is ideal when informing residents about your plan.

GET YOUR VISION GOING!

Does your city want to be next to adopt Vision Zero?

Vision Zero requires strong commitment, measurable strategies, and clear accountability. Today, more leaders across the region are advocating for Vision Zero by initiating grassroots campaigns that are quickly growing to a national level and transforming our neighborhoods to safer places to live and work.

Better designed biking infrastructure benefits everyone. It fosters healthier communities by increasing physical activity, reducing injury, and improving equity. Safer designs can also strengthen local economies and support the environment.

By prioritizing Vision Zero in your policies and plans, you can create safe, connected, and comfortable neighborhoods where everyone can bike, bus, walk, or drive with confidence.4

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

For more information, contact Andrea Clinkscales, Principal Planner, at andreac@cascade.org.

Austin Vision Zero Task Force
austintexas.gov/department/vision-zero-task-force

Crash not Accident Campaign
crashnotaccident.com

Great Streets for Los Angeles
scribd.com/doc/241388359/Great-Streets-for-Los-Angeles

The Vision Zero Initiative (Sweden)
visionzeroinitiative.com

Vision Zero Network (U.S.)
visionzeronetwork.org/

Vision Zero NYC
nyc.gov/html/visionzero

Vision Zero Portland
portlandoregon.gov/transportation/40390

Vision Zero San Francisco
visionzerosf.org

Vision Zero Seattle
seattle.gov/visionzero

WSDOT Target Zero
targetzero.com

4 Vision Zero Network [Data file]. Retrieved from visionzeroinitiative.com

Source: People For Bikes