

A Call for Vision Zero and Slow Streets in the City of Fresno  
By BPAC's Slow Streets Task Force

Somehow this has been one of the worst and best years for biking and walking in Fresno. Pandemic lockdowns have invited more people to walk and bike in their own neighborhoods. At the same time, 2020 is already one of the deadliest years yet in Fresno (16 pedestrian fatalities so far). For years, Fresnoans have wanted safer places to walk and bike in their own neighborhoods, yet the city cannot supply the demand. While the city council formally voted to ask public works to work with us on creating a Slow Streets program, funding wasn't attached. Slow Streets are temporary closures of neighborhood streets that give residents full use of the road to walk, jog, or bike. The target areas for this are neighborhoods that don't have access to parks, which we have a lot of in Fresno. The City Council has formally voted to start developing a Slow Streets program to increase bicycle and safety during the pandemic by temporarily rebalancing city streets to increase space available for biking and walking during the pandemic. This is a program successfully implemented in L.A., Oakland, San Francisco, and others as a successful way to cheaply provide safe places to walk and bike.

When will safer streets across Fresno truly be a priority? Other cities have responded to high rates of traffic fatalities by creating their own Vision Zero programs. These programs share the goal of eliminating traffic fatalities entirely. The methods they use include: 1. Creating a High Injury Network or a list of streets where the most people are getting killed or injured. 2. Either lowering speed limits on these roads or separating people altogether 3. Creating a Vision Zero Task force with members of the public works department and community groups.

It is an understatement to say that it may take a long time to meet the ambitious goals of this program. Fresno's government has a reputation for taking its time and the permanent infrastructure will easily dwarf our current public works budget. You aren't the only one seeing dollar signs. But, the program isn't just about specific infrastructure improvements. It's also a philosophy that requires the full commitment of every responsible department to implement it, often-times, requiring them to overcome existing bureaucratic barriers. For example, in L.A. their city government had issues with finding enough funding for Vision Zero projects that required 2 or more departments to provide funding. As a solution, L.A. came up with joint-departmental budget requests to solve this problem. It's simple and encourages multiple departments to work together more often and more frequently than before.

In order to be officially recognized as a Vision Zero Community, Fresno would be required by the official Vision Zero network campaign to do the following; set clear goals to reduce traffic fatalities(L.A. in 2015 committed to zero fatalities by 2025),create a Vision Zero plan to achieve them, and for the city mayor and key departments (public works, transportation, planning and development, police, etc) to publicly commit themselves to work together to fulfill the plan's goals.

[https://visionzeronetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Form\\_Consideration-for-Recognition-as-Vision-Zero-Community.pdf](https://visionzeronetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Form_Consideration-for-Recognition-as-Vision-Zero-Community.pdf)).

Still, consider the cost of business as usual. Should we accept the death of Autumn Frank and her unborn child as an unavoidable consequence of daily life? (<https://www.fresnobee.com/news/local/crime/article244690312.html>)