

**COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE**  
Inter-office Communication

DATE: 6/21/2024

TO: Marcelia Nicholson, Chairwoman, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors

FROM: Donna Brown-Martin, Director, Department of Transportation

SUBJECT: From the Director, Department of Transportation, requesting approval and adoption of the resolution affirming Milwaukee County's commitment to Vision Zero by the year 2037 and its accompanying fatal and serious injury crash percentage reduction goals every three years between 2025 and 2037.

FILE TYPE: Action Item

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**BACKGROUND**

In January 2022, the Milwaukee County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) began the process of submitting multiple state and federal grant applications to help fund our first-ever countywide safe streets planning initiative, entitled the Complete Communities Transportation Planning Project. The Committee on Transportation and Transit first received an update in March 2022. (File No. 22-374). Milwaukee County received a Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grant for \$235,000 (\$188,000 state funds + \$47,000 local match) from the State of Wisconsin to fund Phase One of the project, our public engagement campaign and countywide crash data analysis. Later that year, Milwaukee County received \$1,000,000 (\$800,000 federal funds + \$200,000 local match) as part of the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) program to fund the Comprehensive Safety Action Plan development process for both Milwaukee County and all participating municipalities.

At the September 2023 Committee on Transportation and Transit meeting, we provided an update on the public engagement process, the Safe Streets Roadshow, that occurred throughout Summer 2023 (File No. 23-826) through which at least one public meeting took place in each of our county's 19 municipalities. At the January 2024 committee meeting, we provided findings from both our Safe Streets Roadshow and the crash data analysis performed by our consultants (File No. 24-124) while at the March 2024 committee meeting, we provided notice of the publication of this project's [Transportation Safety Assessment Report](#) (File No. 24-298). Also in March, in collaboration with Medical College of Wisconsin and UW-Milwaukee, we released the [Milwaukee County Motor Vehicle Collision Dashboard](#). While those activities encompassed Phase One of this project, we are now happy to provide an update on the start of Phase Two, the Comprehensive Safety Action Plan development process.

To complete the requirements of a United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) Comprehensive Safety Action Plan (CSAP), eight components must be completed (descriptions of each component can be found on our [project website](#)). As you can see, the Action Item in this report is related to component #1, Leadership Commitment and Goal Setting. Without the Board of Supervisors' approval and adoption of a commitment to Vision Zero by a certain date, our countywide CSAP will be incomplete.

- 1) Leadership Commitment and Goal Setting
- 2) Planning Structure
- 3) Safety Analysis
- 4) Engagement and Collaboration
- 5) Equity Considerations
- 6) Policy and Process Changes
- 7) Strategy and Project Selections
- 8) Progress and Transparency

Through two different Request for Proposals (RFP) processes earlier this year, MCDOT selected WSP USA, Inc. as the lead consultant for our Action Plan Development Consultant and Toole Design Group, LLC, as the Traffic Safety Data Consultant. These are both nationally-renowned firms that specialize in multimodal transportation planning, data analysis, public engagement and safe streets countermeasure innovations and also have extensive experience with Vision Zero policymaking. Together with the project team from the MCDOT Director's Office, we will complete Milwaukee County's CSAP by January 2025. Thereafter, the project team—in collaboration with each participating Milwaukee County municipality—will complete the municipal CSAPs by July 2025.

One of the purposes for developing a CSAP is to become eligible to apply for Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) federal implementation funding to help pay for newly-constructed traffic calming infrastructure at selected intersections and roadway segments on our specific list of Corridors of Concern. A list of 21 streets throughout Milwaukee County has been generated based on results of our Phase One crash data analysis along with resident feedback from last summer's Safe Streets Roadshow public engagement meetings. The Corridors of Concern are as follows (listed alphabetically):

- 27<sup>th</sup> St.
- 60<sup>th</sup> St.
- 76<sup>th</sup> St.
- 92<sup>nd</sup> St.
- 108<sup>th</sup> St.
- Capitol Dr.
- Fond du Lac Ave.
- Good Hope Rd.
- Green Bay Ave.
- Hampton Ave.
- Lake Dr.
- Layton Ave.
- Lincoln Ave.
- Mayfair Rd.
- Miller Park Way
- National Ave.
- North Ave.
- Port Washington Rd.
- Sherman Blvd.
- Silver Spring Dr.
- Teutonia Ave.

While most of these corridors (Capitol Drive and 27<sup>th</sup> Street, for example) ranked highly with respect to fatal and serious injury crash risk during our Phase One analysis, some of these corridors did not. However, Milwaukee County residents repeatedly identified other corridors in which they consistently experienced safety hazards and witnessed reckless driving (Lake Drive and 108<sup>th</sup> Street/Mayfair Road, for example). These multi-jurisdictional corridors, many of which span the length of our county, are the emphasis of the countywide CSAP. Each municipality will have the opportunity, when developing their own CSAP with our consultant team, to develop their own Corridors of Concern list that is unique to their community. Despite having the opportunity to develop their municipality's CSAP, it is critical for each and every municipality to be involved in the development of the countywide CSAP. Currently, most are already participating in one of our steering committees, the Safety Working Group.

According to the Vision Zero Network, Vision Zero is a strategy to eliminate all traffic fatalities and severe injuries, while increasing safe, healthy and equitable mobility for all. It was first implemented in Sweden in the 1990s and has proved successful across Europe. Today, many American governmental entities are employing this strategy. Vision Zero:

- 1) Stresses that traffic deaths are preventable as opposed to inevitable
- 2) Integrates human failing in approach instead of perfecting human behavior
- 3) Aims to prevent fatal and severe crashes rather than collisions
- 4) Uses a systems approach instead of holding the individual responsible
- 5) Maintains that saving lives is not expensive

While this is a fundamentally different way to approach traffic safety, Milwaukee County Department of Transportation and all participating municipalities are in the process of committing to this strategy. As such, we need to set a goal year by which Milwaukee County will aim for zero fatal and serious injury crashes on our roadways. We are also required to set percentage reduction goals in the years preceding our Vision Zero goal year.

Employing the actionable strategies laid out in Vision Zero's recommendations will lead to improved safety for all roadway users by the following: Prioritizing Roadway Design, Focusing on Speed Management, Utilizing Impactful Education Strategies and Ensuring Enforcement is Equitable. According to the Vision Zero Network, a good Action Plan is a living document and includes a dynamic, iterative process to establish and implement strategies, evaluate progress and make corrective actions as needed, all the while engaging the community and prioritizing equity.

Our research in Phase One indicated that Milwaukee County has a long way to go to reach Vision Zero, but we're already on our way thanks to ongoing efforts throughout Phase One in this project plus Complete Streets policymaking, traffic calming infrastructure and demonstration activities from municipalities like the City of Milwaukee, Wauwatosa, West Allis, Shorewood, South Milwaukee, Greendale and Whitefish Bay. After Phase One concluded, it was clear that our originally-proposed Vision Zero goal year of 2028 would not be feasible due to how many fatal and serious injury crashes are

still occurring each year, how prevalent reckless driving is, the methodical nature of all levels of government and the necessity to go through governmental channels to obtain funding. Thus, we are requesting approval and adoption of an official Milwaukee County Vision Zero goal year of 2037. Starting in 2025, this gives us 12 years to achieve a 25% reduction in fatal and serious injury crashes every three years. As such, we aim for roadways in Milwaukee County to experience a 25% reduction in the number of fatal and serious injury crashes in 2028 compared to 2025; 50% in 2031; 75% in 2034 and, finally, 100% in 2037 to achieve Vision Zero. The accompanying resolution, if adopted, will serve as approval of this Vision Zero goal year and percentage reduction goals, thus fulfilling our CSAP requirement.

The Vision Zero goal year is a major aspect of the Milwaukee County Comprehensive Safety Action Plan. What's even more significant is that the City of Milwaukee has already committed to Vision Zero by 2037. As all participating municipalities throughout Milwaukee County continue their collaboration and participation in the Complete Communities Transportation Planning Project, we are on a trajectory to potentially witness all 19 municipalities and Milwaukee County to be in alignment with Vision Zero by 2037. Each municipal CSAP will flesh out those plans and how to reach specific percentage reduction targets in their own communities, as well. In short, approval and adoption of this measure will lead directly to more and more roadways throughout Milwaukee County becoming safer for all users and enable every transportation-related project, policy decision and investment to be analyzed through the lens of the county's Vision Zero strategy.

We formally request that you, the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors Transportation and Transit Committee, and subsequently, the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors, move to approve and adopt the attached resolution to affirm a Vision Zero goal year of 2037 for Milwaukee County.

#### **ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN**

- 2A: Determine what, where, and how we deliver services to advance health equity.
- 2B: Break down silos across County government to maximize access to and quality of services offered
- 2C: Apply a racial equity lens to all decisions.
- 3A: Invest "upstream" to address root causes of health disparities.
- 3C: Dismantle barriers to diverse and inclusive communities

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

The Director of Transportation requests approval and adoption of the resolution affirming Milwaukee County's commitment to Vision Zero by the year 2037 and its accompanying fatal and serious injury crash percentage reduction goals every three years between 2025 and 2037.

**FISCAL EFFECT**

There is no fiscal effect.

**TERMS (If applicable)**

N/A

**VIRTUAL MEETING INVITES**

Donna Brown-Martin, Director, Department of Transportation

Jeff Sponcia, Transportation Program Planning Manager, Department of Transportation

**PREPARED BY:**

Jeff Sponcia, Transportation Program Planning Manager, Department of Transportation

**APPROVED BY:**

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Donna Brown-Martin". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Donna Brown-Martin  
Director, Department of Transportation

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Resolution

Fiscal Note

PowerPoint

cc: Kelly Bablitch, Chief of Staff, County Board of Supervisors  
Janelle M. Jensen, Legislative Services Division Manager, Office of the County Clerk