

Dear New Jersey Target Zero Commission,

At New Jersey Future, we strive to promote communities where everyone, including older adults and those with disabilities, can safely walk and bike to destinations. Unfortunately, New Jersey has the nation's highest rate of pedestrian fatalities, with 30% of all traffic fatalities involving pedestrians, according to a new study of data from 2017-2021. The State's existing approach to safety, which focuses on individual behavior through education and enforcement, has failed. It's time for a paradigm shift, one that aligns with best practices and federal guidance.

To eliminate pedestrian fatalities on New Jersey's roads, we need to make sure streets are designed with the safety of pedestrians in mind.

Designing streets to prioritize the movement of people over the movement of vehicles should be the default in built-up areas where the purpose of a street is to facilitate circulation *within a place*, as opposed to facilitating travel *between places*. But the design of local streets and streetscapes – characteristics that affect pedestrian safety like the number of lanes, lane widths, on-street parking, presence and width of sidewalks, frequency of crosswalks, curb cuts, traffic signal timing, turning radii at intersections, building setbacks, off-street parking requirements, street furniture, shade trees, etc. – is a decentralized process determined by a whole host of factors, with requirements and industry standard practices varying by type or category of road and sometimes depending on adjacent land uses.

A first step in formulating strategies to make streets safer for pedestrians is understanding how and why streets end up looking the way they do so that advocates and practitioners in the transportation and planning fields can look for the intervention points where improvements can best be made.

To this end, we recommend that the Commission call for the creation of a resource that lists together in one document all the rules, policies, and manuals that affect streetscapes, describes where each factor is applicable and indicates which level of government is responsible for administering them. Factors include, but are not limited to:

- Title 39, the main state statute that regulates motor vehicles and traffic in NJ
- The Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL)
- Residential Site Improvement Standards (RSIS)
- Access Code
- Functional Classification System
- NJDOT straight-line diagrams
- Complete Streets guides
- AASHTO Roadside Design Guide
- NACTO's suite of urban design guides
- ITE Parking and Trip Generation Manuals
- Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices

We also recommend that NJDOT assemble, into a form easily readable by other transportation and planning advocates and practitioners, its data about existing road segments that can inform which streetscape improvements would be most effective at improving pedestrian safety.

In addition to our comments above, New Jersey Future is pleased to submit the following recommendations to the New Jersey Target Zero Commission for consideration in their process of developing a statewide safety action plan.

Recommendations for the Target Zero Commission:

- Require broader public outreach, including listening sessions and meetings with key stakeholders, advocates, and experts.
- Focus on inclusion and equity for all road users.
- Encourage active transportation and mass transit as safe and viable forms of transportation for people of all ages and abilities.
- Create a publicly accessible data website that includes traffic crash data and a high-injury network of roadways in the State.

Recommendations for the Target Zero Commission's Statewide Safety Action Plan:

- Apply the FHWA-recommended Safe System Approach (with five key elements – Safer Roads, Safer Road Users, Safer Vehicles, Safer Speeds, and Post-Crash Care), which emphasizes the design of roadways including sidewalks, crosswalks, shoulders, and trail crossings; bicycle and scooter parking; and access to transit, schools, and parks.
- Prioritize shared-use path development to allocate formula funding for trail projects.
- Adopt measurable targets for total and per capita vehicle miles traveled (VMT) reduction in 2035 and 2050.
- Incentivize developments that reduce VMT based on a VMT impact analysis of large land development projects conducted by multiple state agencies.
- Encourage and support the adoption of municipal land use and zoning that allows for compact, walkable development.
- Encourage municipal officials to use the [State Development and Redevelopment Plan](#) (the "State Plan") as a resource in promoting development patterns that reduce the need to drive. The [Citizen's Guide](#) to the State Plan summarizes the Plan's [goals](#), including a [transportation](#) focus on "Encourag[ing] the implementation of land use policies that support biking, walking, and public transportation and reduce car dependency."
- Encourage state and local governments to remove minimum parking requirements in compact, walkable areas, especially near transit stations.
- Adopt more powerful state incentives to encourage local actions in support of Transit-Oriented Development (TOD).
- Provide dedicated, sustainable operating funding for New Jersey Transit that enables maintenance of existing service in the short term and positions the agency to grow and modernize service in the near future.
- Provide state funding for micromobility incentive programs, especially to make E-bikes accessible to lower-income people.

- Increase state funding and technical assistance for local implementation of complete and green streets that focus on eliminating road deaths and prioritizing the needs of underserved populations (seniors, children, persons with disabilities, low-income residents, carfree households, etc.).

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written comments. For questions or more information, please contact Zeke Weston at [zweston@njfuture.org](mailto:zweston@njfuture.org).

Sincerely,

Zeke Weston, Policy Coordinator, New Jersey Future