



Better Eugene-Springfield Transit

February 15, 2017

Testimony to House Committee on Transportation Policy re HB 2667

Rob Zako, Executive Director

Better Eugene-Springfield Transit (BEST) supports House Bill 2667, which creates a new task force to examine strategies to eliminate deaths and life-changing injuries on Oregon's roads.

The statistics are sobering. From 2014 to 2015, traffic fatalities nationally increased by 7%, the largest percentage increase in 50 years. During the same time period, Oregon suffered a shocking 25% increase, the highest of any state other than Vermont.¹ From 2015 to 2016, traffic deaths in Oregon rose an additional 11%.² Locally, in both 2014 and 2015, Lane County suffered more traffic deaths than any other Oregon county.³

But statistics don't convey the human toll. Two years ago, a man driving a pickup truck through Springfield lost attention, ran a red light, and killed three children, who with their mother were legally crossing Main Street.⁴ That one tragedy irreparably affected the lives of many—including the driver, who wishes he could redo the afternoon of February 22, 2015.



James Hudson Crawford and Cortney Hudson with their children, John Alexander Day, 8, McKenzie Mae Hudson, 5, and Tyler James Hudson, 4. (Source: KVAL TV.)

Those three deaths shocked our community, prompted the mayors of Springfield and Eugene to accept the Mayors' Challenge for Safer People, Safer Streets,⁵ and led BEST to start a coalition—including youth (Safe Routes to School⁶), mothers (Mothers Against Drunk Driving⁷), seniors (AARP Oregon⁸), and others—calling for an end to such tragedies.⁹

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BEST's mission is to promote a thriving, equitable, and sustainable Eugene-Springfield area with a world-class network of safe, practical, and affordable options for people to ride the bus, bicycle, and walk. BEST pursues this mission by educating the public, convening community leaders, helping forge consensus, and advocating in the public interest.

BEST believes road tragedies are a critical problem:

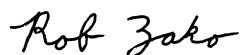
- **Affect everyone:** Any of us or our loved ones could be a victim, whether driving a car, truck or motorcycle; bicycling; walking; or using a mobility device.¹⁰
- **Are a public health epidemic:** In Oregon, road crashes are the 2nd, 3rd and 4th leading cause of death for people ages 15–24, 25–34 and 35–44, respectively.¹¹
- **Have economic costs:** Lane County estimates that the cost of road fatalities over the last five years throughout the county has averaged \$318 million—per year!¹²

BEST believes the state must take action:

- **Tragedies are preventable:** Twenty years ago Sweden and more recently communities across the United States are showing that a data-driven, best-practices, cost-effective approach combining engineering, education, enforcement and emergency response (“Four E’s”) works.
- **Communities are stepping up:** Lane County with Towards Zero Deaths,¹³ Eugene with Vision Zero,¹⁴ Springfield,¹⁵ Lane Transit District with Vision Zero,¹⁶ the Central Lane Metropolitan Planning Organization with a draft safety plan,¹⁷ and other local jurisdictions are working together to save lives.
- **Oregon must lead:** But there is only so much Oregon’s local communities can do absent leadership from the state. Oregon must take action to save lives on our roads.

BEST strongly supports HB 2667 to bring together leaders from across the state to understand the safety problems plaguing Oregon and to recommend needed actions.

For BEST,



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Attachment:

1. Vision Zero Network, “9 Components of a Strong Vision Zero Commitment,” <http://visionzeronetwork.org/project/9-components-of-a-strong-vision-zero-commitment/>.

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- ¹ National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, "Traffic fatalities up sharply," 8/29/2016, <http://www.nhtsa.gov/press-releases/traffic-fatalities-sharply-2015>.
See also: Oregon Dept. of Transportation, "2015 Oregon Motor Vehicle Fatal and Injury Traffic Crashes Quick Facts," 7/12/2016, http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/TD/TDATA/car/docs/2015_QuickFacts.pdf.
- ² Lauren E. Hernandez, "Fatal auto crashes in Oregon on the rise again," *Statesman Journal*, 2/4/2017, <http://www.statesmanjournal.com/story/news/2017/02/04/fatal-auto-crashes-oregon-rise-again/97286682/>.
- ³ Lane County, "Transportation Safety Action Plan," <http://www.lanecounty.org/cms/one.aspx?portalId=3585881&pageId=5318069>.
- ⁴ Dashiell Paulson, "3 children killed while crossing street," *Register-Guard*, 2/23/2015, <http://projects.registerguard.com/rg/news/local/32800588-75/three-dead-in-main-street-crash-in-springfield.html.csp>.
- ⁵ U.S. Dept. of Transportation, "Success Stories from the Mayors' Challenge for Safer People, Safer Streets," 9/22/2016, <http://www.transportation.gov/mayors-challenge>.
- ⁶ Eugene Springfield Safe Routes to School, <http://eugenesrts.org/about/>.
- ⁷ Mothers Against Drunk Driving, Eugene, Oregon Chapter, <http://www.madd.org/local-offices/or/eugene-affiliate.html>.
- ⁸ AARP, "Vision Zero Looks to Make Streets Safer—For People of All Ages," <http://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/getting-around/info-2015/vision-zero-safe-streets-for-everyone.html>.
- ⁹ Mac McLean, "Vision Zero's Vision—No Traffic Deaths," *AARP Bulletin*, 7/1/2016, <http://states.aarp.org/vision-zero-traffic-deaths/>.
- ¹⁰ Chelsea Gorrow, "Survivor of crash with suspected drunken driver shares her story: Carly Gabrielson, campaign manager for Rep. DeFazio, hopes her experience will help others," *Register-Guard*, 1/4/2017, <http://registerguard.com/rg/news/local/35130692-75/survivor-of-crash-with-suspected-drunken-driver-shares-her-story.html.csp>.
- ¹¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Official Final Deaths 2014, 1/6/2016, <http://www.worldlifeexpectancy.com/oregon-cause-of-death-by-age-and-gender>.
- ¹² Staff presentation, Lane County Board of Commissioners work session, 1/24/2017. Note that the estimated economic value of a statistical life was \$9.4 million: U.S. Dept. of Transportation, "Revised Departmental Guidance on Valuation of a Statistical Life in Economic Analysis," 8/2/2016, <http://www.transportation.gov/office-policy/transportation-policy/revised-departmental-guidance-on-valuation-of-a-statistical-life-in-economic-analysis>.
- ¹³ Toward Zero Deaths (TZD) is the national strategy on highway safety, developed by American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, Governors Highway Safety Association, National Association of County Engineers and others, with technical support from Federal Highway Administration, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration and National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Whereas Vision Zero is focused more on urban fatalities, TZD is focused more on rural ones. But the two approaches are both working to eliminate tragedies using the same tools. <http://www.towardzerodeaths.org/>.
- ¹⁴ City of Eugene, "Vision Zero," <http://www.eugene-or.gov/3239/Vision-Zero>.
- ¹⁵ City of Springfield, "Traffic Safety and Control," <http://www.springfield-or.gov/dpw/Traffic.htm>.
- ¹⁶ Lane Transit District, Resolution No. 2016-012, http://www.ltd.org/events-calendar?date_from=2016-04-20#68728.
- ¹⁷ Central Lane Metropolitan Planning Organization, *Transportation Safety Action Plan* (draft), <http://www.lcog.org/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Item/2093?fileID=9129>.

9 Components of a Strong Vision Zero Commitment

Based on the experiences of early-adopter cities in the United States, these nine components have proven to be an effective high-level framework for communities considering a Vision Zero commitment. While these are not the only factors to consider, they are critical aspects to ensure a strong and lasting commitment to Vision Zero.

POLITICAL COMMITMENT

The highest-ranking local officials (Mayor, City Council, City Manager) make an official and public commitment to a Vision Zero goal to achieve zero traffic fatalities and severe injuries among all road users (including people walking, biking, using transit, and driving) within a set timeframe. This should include passage of a local policy laying out goals, timeline, stakeholders, and a commitment to community engagement, transparency, & equitable outcomes.



MULTI-DISCIPLINARY LEADERSHIP

An official city Vision Zero Taskforce (or Leadership Committee) is created and charged with leading the planning effort for Vision Zero. The Taskforce should include, at a minimum, high-ranking representatives from the Office of the Mayor, Police, Transportation (or equivalent), and Public Health. Other departments to involve include Planning, Fire, Emergency Services, Public Works, District Attorney, Office of Senior Services, Disability, and the School District.



ACTION PLAN

Vision Zero Action Plan (or Strategy) is created within 1 year of initial commitment and is implemented with clear strategies, owners of each strategy, interim targets, timelines, & performance measures.



EQUITY

City stakeholders commit to both an equitable approach to Vision Zero by establishing inclusive and representative processes, as well as equitable outcomes by ensuring measurable benchmarks to provide safe transportation options for all road users in all parts of the city.



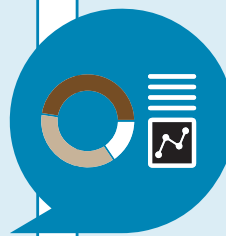
COOPERATION & COLLABORATION

A commitment is made to encourage meaningful cooperation and collaboration among relevant governmental agencies & community stakeholders to establish a framework for multiple stakeholders to set shared goals and focus on coordination and accountability.



SYSTEMS-BASED APPROACH

City leaders commit to and prioritize a systems-based approach to Vision Zero — focusing on the built environment, systems, and policies that influence behavior — as well as adopting messaging that emphasizes that these traffic losses are preventable.



DATA-DRIVEN

City stakeholders commit to gather, analyze, utilize, and share reliable data to understand traffic safety issues and prioritize resources based on evidence of the greatest needs and impact.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Opportunities are created to invite meaningful community engagement, such as select community representation on the Taskforce, broader community input through public meetings or workshops, online surveys, and other feedback opportunities.



TRANSPARENCY

The city's process is transparent to city stakeholders and the community, including regular updates on the progress on the Action Plan and performance measures, and a yearly report (at minimum) to the local governing board (e.g., City Council).



For more visit the Vision Zero Network at visionzeronetwork.org.
Questions or ideas? Contact leah@visionzeronetwork.org.