

The purpose of the following report (one of six) is to orient readers to the professional skills and potential contributions of Regional Planning Professionals for advancing Vision Zero. These reports were produced by the 2022 – 2023 NC Vision Zero Capstone team at UNC-Chapel Hill and are the result of a sector-specific landscape scan and interviews with experts in the field.

The Diverse Roles of Regional Planning Professionals in Achieving Vision Zero

Introduction

Vision Zero is a growing movement throughout the United States to eliminate all traffic-related deaths and serious injuries and to ensure the safe and equitable mobility for all road users, no matter how they get around. This approach to transportation safety requires collaboration among diverse groups of professionals, working in partnership with communities to ensure transportation decision-making is evidence-driven and equitable across diverse road users. The diverse groups and coalitions needed to support Vision Zero implementation include local traffic planners, engineers, policy makers, public health professionals, emergency responders, community members, and other key partners.

The Regional Planning Sector

Regional planning professionals are involved in community design, collaborating regularly with local, state, and federal governments for projects relating to population growth, land use, and regional development. Regional planners also work within private industry roles that seek to inform government bodies and the broader public on the sustainability of community growth and can contribute to traffic safety efforts and coordination. Some examples of traffic safety efforts include developing projects that increase access within communities, improving current traffic patterns and planning, and maximizing public safety across transportation networks.

“We’re trying to take a really comprehensive approach so it’s not just establishing annual safety targets and hoping for the best. Instead, it’s trying to figure out how we see [those efforts] in the communities [we work with] and the ways that we can fund and direct policy change to make impact.* ”

– Regional Planning Professional

Case Study #1

The Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) for parts of Kansas and Missouri have developed strategies for addressing three broad characteristics of crashes and fatalities, including infrastructure, behavior, and special users (e.g., young drivers, truck drivers). Current and ongoing strategies include installing flashing beacons at pedestrian crossings, improving street markings, providing context-sensitive countermeasures for speeding, enhancing transit stops and pedestrian infrastructure, and expanding bicycle facilities. The safety plan informs planning and funding priorities for future MPO projects and provides a unified vision for preventing crash fatalities.



Case Study #2

The Florida Department of Transportation’s Data Governance Guide documents the Department’s process for collecting safety data, integration, and analysis in a multi-year governance effort. This data governance overhaul allows Florida Department of Transportation to collect and analyze data from various sources to implement predictive safety models for all roads on the Florida State Highway System.



How Regional Planning Can Support Vision Zero

Leadership

- Informing policymakers on best practices for transportation and community development
- Serving as a lead agency for regional Vision Zero initiatives
- Incorporating Vision Zero and Safe Systems approaches in longrange transportation planning and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
- Establishing commitments to Vision Zero in the Unified Planning Work Program

Resources

- Collaborating across municipal jurisdictions to resolve regional transportation issues
- Applying Safe System principles when updating TIPs
- Funding local projects that enhance safety, and support transit usage
- Providing grants to localities for pilot programs to support transit use and micromobilities

Skills and Knowledge

- Establishing a scoring criteria to emphasize Safe System principles and connectivity
- Creating mechanisms for community engagement on projects that aim to enhance transportation connectivity
- Analyzing anticipated project impacts for safety, equity, and connectivity

Making Data Accessible

- Measuring and reporting community growth
- Analyzing crash-related data and integrating data systems to conduct predictive rather than reactive modeling
- Increasing access to safety data for community members

Community Development

- Gaining community insights and concerns regarding roadways, transportation, access, equity, and safety
- Consulting policymakers on community and transportation development
- Applying for grants to advance Vision Zero

Case Study #3

The Hillsborough County, Florida MPO passed a Vision Zero resolution along with its partner organizations. As part of the Vision Zero Action Plan published in 2017, the MPO collaborated with partners including the county, public schools, Florida Department of Transportation, law enforcement, and the Department of Health. The region is now addressing speed management, with communities of concern identified throughout the county and plans to proactively prioritize new speed limits and design features in corridors with the highest risk for serious crashes.



Key Resources for Regional Planning Professionals Interested in Learning More About Vision Zero

- [Vision Zero Core Elements Summary](#)
- [Transportation Safety Planning and the Zero Deaths Vision: A Guide for Metropolitan Planning Organizations](#)
- [Racial Equity: Getting to Results](#)
- [Moving From Vision to Action: Fundamental Principles, Policies & Practices to Advance Vision Zero in the U.S.](#)



“We’re looking at numbers at a very high level. We know what the state issues are. We know that there are gaps. We know there’s under reporting, and so that’s where it comes in handy to work with locals on actual plans to get a finer grain analysis.*”

– Regional Planning Professional

* Quotes have been edited for clarity; full quotes are available upon request.



Connect with CSCRS

  @CSCRSinfo | info@roadsafety.unc.edu | www.roadsafety.unc.edu

This product was supported by the Collaborative Sciences Center for Road Safety, a U.S. Department of Transportation National University Transportation Center promoting safety.