

MINUTES

Regional Transportation Council PUBLIC MEETING

Regional Safety Program

Mobility 2045 Update: Transportation Conformity Determination

Modifications to the Fiscal Year 2022 and 2023 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

Meeting Date and Location

The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) held a hybrid public meeting Monday, Feb. 6, 2023, at noon in Arlington. Patrons could attend in person, via phone, or view the live stream at www.nctcog.publicinput.com/nctcogFeb23. Natalie Bettger, Senior Program Manager, moderated the meeting, attended by 66 people.

Public Meeting Purpose and Topics

The public meeting was held in accordance with the NCTCOG Transportation Department Public Participation Plan, which became effective June 1, 1994, as approved by the Regional Transportation Council (RTC), the transportation policy board for the metropolitan planning organization, and amended on November 8, 2018. Staff presented information about:

- Regional Safety Program – **presented by Natalie Bettger**
- Mobility 2045 Update: Transportation Conformity Determination – **presented by Jenny Narvaez and Amy Johnson**

Modifications to the Fiscal Year 2022 and 2023 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) were also posted online for public review and comment.

The public meeting was held to educate, inform, and seek comments from the public. Comments were solicited from those attending who wished to speak for the record. The presentations made during the meeting as well as a video recording were posted online at www.nctcog.publicinput.com/nctcogFeb23.

Summary of Presentations

Regional Safety Program presentation:

<https://www.nctcog.org/getmedia/971a6b6d-b985-4f14-a113-4eff8b3be2e4/Regional-Safety-Update.pdf>

Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) like NCTCOG are required to monitor and set targets for a specific set of performance measures. In December 2017, the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) established initial safety performance targets for 2018 and adopted the Regional Safety Position, which states even one death on the transportation system is unacceptable.

The Roadway Safety Plan provides a framework for identifying, analyzing, and prioritizing roadway safety improvements on local roads. It serves as a guide to identify crash factors,

which contribute to a high number of fatal and serious injuries. The overall goal is to eliminate fatal crashes by 2050.

The Regional Safety Plan emphasizes the following areas on a regional level:

- Speeding
- Distracted driving
- Impaired driving
- Intersection safety
- Bicyclist and pedestrian safety
- Roadway and lane departures
- Occupant protection
- Motorcycles

Staff are working on developing a list of high-priority safety improvement projects for implementation after the Roadway Safety Plan is completed. Additional information can be found in the presentation slide deck at www.nctcog.publicinput.com/nctcogFeb23.

Mobility 2045 Update: Transportation Conformity Determination presentation:

<https://www.nctcog.org/getmedia/99df7f47-96b6-4e27-991e-caff291de3e0/Mobility-2045-Update-Transportation-Conformity-Determination.pdf>

Transportation Conformity is a federal requirement in nonattainment areas to conduct air quality analysis on projects, programs, and policies identified in transportation plans, federally funded projects, and projects required for federal approval. The 2022 Transportation Conformity Determination applies to the Mobility 2045 - 2022 Update as well as the 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). It satisfies the following requirements:

- Demonstrates projected emissions from transportation projects are within emission limits
- Ensures federal funding and approval are applied to transportation projects consistent with air quality planning goals
- Ensures transportation control measures approved in State Implementation Plans (SIPs) are given priority for federal funding

The Mobility 2045 - 2022 Update was impacted by the Federal Highway Administration's Conformity review process, which focused on ensuring consistency between the long-range plan and the short-range plan, the TIP, and the networks being used for the air quality analysis. No projects were added or removed as part of this process, and the changes are reflected in roadway recommendation maps and tables. The financial constraint requirement for the Plan did not change, but there was an increase in funding for infrastructure maintenance and a decrease in funding for freeways, tollways, and arterials. For more information on the Mobility 2045 - 2022 Update and the 2022 Transportation Conformity Determination, visit www.nctcog.org/PlanInProgress.

Summary of Online Review and Comment Topic

Modifications to the Fiscal Year 2022 and 2023 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) handout:

<https://www.nctcog.org/getmedia/b8a473da-41b8-4399-a9a4-704c7cdf24b/Modifications-to-the-Fiscal-Years-2022-and-2023-Unified-Planning-Work-Program.pdf>

The UPWP summarizes transportation activities for NCTCOG's metropolitan planning area, which covers a 12-county region. It is divided into five major task areas:

- Administration and Management
- Transportation Data Development and Maintenance
- Short-Range Planning and Programming and Air Quality and Transit Operations
- Metropolitan Transportation Plan
- Special Studies and System Operations

The proposed modifications to the Fiscal Year 2022 and 2023 UPWP address project updates and funding adjustments. The Regional Transportation Council took action on the aforementioned items on February 9, 2023. This item will be submitted to TxDOT in early March.

COMMENTS RECEIVED DURING THE MEETING

Roadway Safety Plan

Phyllis Silver, Citizen

A. Pedestrian crosswalks

Comment: Traffic lights are currently set where pedestrians can cross while cars are turning into the lane. Since this is a safety issue, there needs to be a delay for cars or traffic lights should not allow them to turn until pedestrians have finished crossing. This is especially an issue on Preston Road/Forest Lane and Preston Road/Royal Lane.

Summary of Response by Natalie Bettger: NCTCOG will have its partner agencies look into this issue and see if there is an opportunity to not allow vehicles to turn while pedestrians are crossing.

B. Cellphone use while driving

Comment: There needs to be more awareness around cell phone use while driving in general and not just in school zones.

Summary of Response by Natalie Bettger: NCTCOG is trying to create more programs with the \$50 million allocated from the Regional Transportation Council to promote the dangers of cell phone use while driving.

Citizen

A. Reducing speed limits

Question: If traffic deaths went up when there were less cars on the road and speeds were higher, is there an effort to lower speed limits to reduce traffic deaths?

Summary of Response by Natalie Bettger: Lowering speed limits is a possible countermeasure being considered to help prevent deaths. The greater the speed, the more serious the collision. NCTCOG would look at which routes could be appropriate to apply it to and then the road operator, whether it is the Texas Department of Transportation or a local organization, would have to investigate before implementing the speed limit modification.

B. Funding prioritization

Question: Is there an effort to prioritize funding to address deficiencies in intersections with higher accidents or deaths?

Summary of Response by Natalie Bettger: Yes, NCTCOG has completed an intersection safety plan that looks at crashes and the types of injuries at different intersections. We looked at the crashes and the severity of the injuries at those locations to prioritize where we would designate funding for intersection improvements.

Mobility 2045 Update Transportation Conformity Determination

Hexel Colorado, Citizen

A: Crash Analysis Studio

Comment: On Page 5 of the Mobility 2045 Update, it says, "Analyze crashes to find room for safety improvement". Does NCTCOG utilize the Crash Analysis Studio developed by Strong Towns?

Summary of Response by Amy Johnson: NCTCOG does not use that tool in our crash analysis reference, which is included in our safety chapter. It includes information related to crash density and is done in collaboration with our safety team.

B: Road diets

Comment: On Page 5 of the Mobility 2045 Update, one of the bubbles under Infrastructure Maintenance says, "Existing roadways: Maintained to ensure their reliability and maximize their useful life". Does NCTCOG make it a priority to actively seek out opportunities for road diets, even on roads where constituents have yet to request it?

Summary of Response by Amy Johnson: We don't actively seek to implement anything that's not requested by community members or elected officials who represent them on our Regional Transportation Council. In that section, a lot of the projects included are more in the freeway and tollway category where we look at ways we could use asset optimization to enhance roadways without having to go through major reconstruction. In terms of road diets, they're not directly included in the Plan, but we do include context sensitive complete streets, which are quite similar. Urbanism and ruralism are also considered.

Kristine, Citizen

A. HOV lanes

Question: With regards to the changes to HOV lanes, are you reducing planned HOV lanes, increasing them, or changing their alignments. How does that relate to ozone emissions?

Summary of Response by Jenny Narvaez: HOV lanes help reduce the number of single occupancy vehicles on the roads, which has an influence on and improves air quality. The more automobiles on the road, the more pollutants they produce. Additionally, driving at lower speeds when there is heavy traffic on the roads increases car emissions.

Phyllis Silver, Citizen

A. Ozone alert days

Comment: In the past, public transportation agencies would have free or reduced fares during ozone alert days. There needs to be more public education on ozone.

Summary of Response by Jenny Narvaez: NCTCOG staff will work on publicizing more information on ozone and will also look into free and reduced fares for days with a high ozone alert. More information on ozone can also be found at www.AirNorthTexas.org.

Other

Hexel Colorado, Citizen

A. Eliminating minimum parking requirements

Comment: Countless books, studies, and local and national advocacy groups call for eliminating minimum parking requirements. We have more than enough "studies" on the matter. Is NCTCOG willing to "test" instead of just "study"? I know this is a city code matter but if recommendation came from the top, it would make a huge difference.

Summary of Response by Amy Johnson: NCTCOG staff are currently working on parking counts. Efforts might include action items or pilot programs, and we would be able to connect you to the appropriate staff for more information.

B. Universal Studios in Frisco

Comment: The development of Universal Studios in Frisco will likely increase traffic, increase the commute for low-wage workers, and increase surface parking lots in the area. How did NCTCOG allow this to happen?

Summary of Response by Natalie Bettger: When NCTCOG does not believe there is a suitable employment and housing balance, we look at the ability to connect transportation services to those facilities for workers. We also seek methods to develop additional affordable housing in certain communities, and we collaborate with cities to do so. We are aware other venues identical to this have been created in our region. We aim to strike a balance between obtaining affordable housing surrounding the site and providing a transit alternative for people to utilize when traveling to employment locations.

A. Job sprawl

Question: What is NCTCOG doing about job sprawl?

Summary of Response by Natalie Bettger: NCTCOG works with local communities and jurisdictions to address land use and transportation linkages to reduce people's need to drive and travel long distances.

B. Alternative modes of transportation

Question: What is NCTCOG doing to actively promote the use of different modes of transportation?

Summary of Response by Natalie Bettger: NCTCOG has a sustainable development group that looks at land-use densities to match up housing and job balances as well as a program called Try Parking It, which encourages the use of alternate modes of transportation. In 2020, the Regional Transportation Council adopted a policy to reduce travel by 20 percent every year. We also have a transit education campaign that emphasizes the benefits of using public transportation. We coordinate with cities and other local partners to improve regional walking and biking connectivity. We also work with local entities to ensure transportation options, utilities, and new developments are available to them.

Summary of Response by Amy Johnson: The NCTCOG long-range plan includes all of the different projects, programs, and policies NCTCOG staff work on, including job sprawl, land-use issues, and transit.

Ashley, Citizen

A. Reimbursement program for alternative modes of transportation

Question: Does NCTCOG have or promote a reimbursement program for people to use alternative modes of transportation to commute to work?

Summary of Response by Natalie Bettger: NCTCOG does not have a reimbursement program, but we do have an incentivized program called Try Parking It (TPI). The Try Parking It website and app allows users to log their commutes and encourages carpooling, taking transit, biking, walking, and teleworking. These activities reduce demand and assist in sustaining our transportation system.

COMMENTS SUBMITTED DURING THE COMMENT PERIOD VIA WEBSITE, EMAIL, SOCIAL MEDIA, & MAIL

Social Media

Twitter

Alrighty, @NCTCOGtrans is having a meeting on public transportation within the DFW/North Central Texas area generally. It's their February monthly meeting. Updates as they are presented 📄 – Denton Transit Posting (@dTXTransitPosts)



Please see Attachment 1 for a full list of the comments received.

Mail

Phyllis Silver, Citizen

Please see Attachment 2 for comments submitted via postal mail.



Denton Transit Posting

Feb 6 · 23 tweets · 5 min read

Alrighty, @NCTCOGtrans is having a meeting on public transportation within the DFW/North Central Texas area generally. it's their february monthly meeting. Updates as they are presented 📌



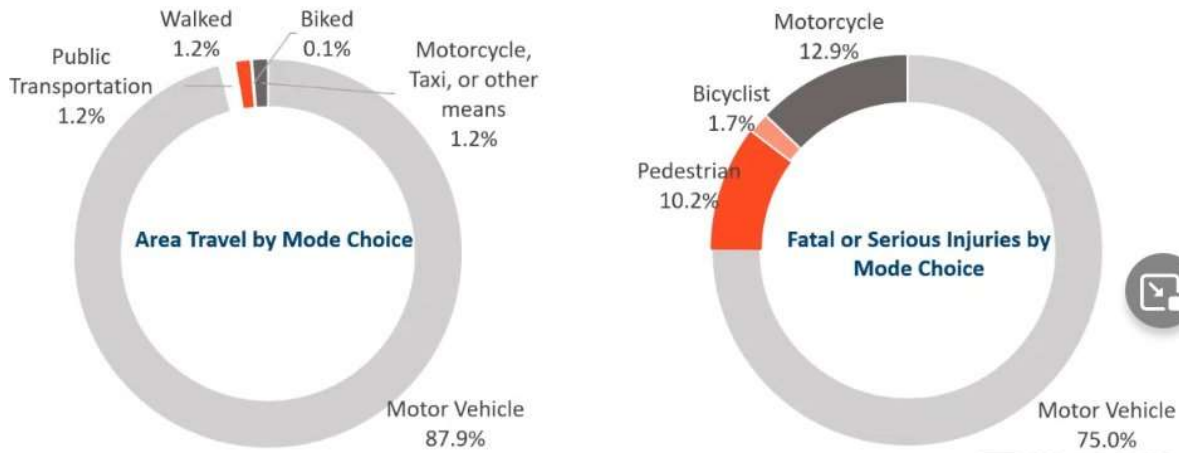
two presentations today: the regional safety plan, and the regional mobility 2045 plan.

First, safety plan: They note there's been an increase in regional traffic violence and fatalities

we see that bikers and pedestrians make up a tiny fraction of people on the roads, but a much larger fraction of fatalities. Again, applying a class analysis to this:

People who cannot afford cars are disproportionately killed by those who can.

Region-wide Analysis - Percentage Fatal and Serious Injuries by Travel Mode (2016-2020)



(also worth noting: there's an interesting idea of "pedestrian" in this data. Do people walking from Loophole to Eastside count as pedestrians? I'm not sure. Do people walking around at the park count as pedestrians? Almost certainly not.)

you'll note that their proposed resolutions to these issues don't include "slow down traffic on dangerous roads" or "add barriers between 1-4 ton vehicles and people without airbags" or "give young drivers, drunk drivers, and old drivers" good non-car options

Regional Safety Plan Emphasis Areas Based on Overrepresentation Analysis



Regional Emphasis Areas

- Speeding
- Distracted driving
- Impaired driving
- Intersection safety
- Bicyclist and pedestrian safety
- Roadway and lane departures
- Occupant protection
- Motorcycles

Additional "Areas of Concern"

- Wrong way driving
- Crashes occurring at night*
- Younger drivers*
- Older road users (65+)*

apparently the state is looking at increasing the weight limit on semis to > 80,000 miles. NCTCOG might put in some opposition to this.

They also note that regional policing agencies are overwhelmed by the amount of crashes on our roads and literally can't document them all

*80,000 lbs, oops.

immediately after asking for suggestions on how to make roads less deadly, they include this death trap as the background for their next slide set.



STATUS OF 2022 TRANSPORTATION CONFORMITY DETERMINATION - RECEIVED

Jenny Narvaez, Program Manager
Amy Johnson, Principal Transportation Planner
February Public Meeting
February 6, 2023



periodic reminder that we are not in conformity for air quality -

I've been told recently this is mostly because On road vehicle emissions and also a few concrete plants. Wonder what that concrete is used a lot for. Nonetheless, we had to submit some stuff for possible changes, but don't worry: no changes to new hwys getting laid, minor changes to how they might get laid, and we're still financially constrained. still spending around \$40B on maintenance, and another \$40B to build more stuff to maintain

@hexel_co this u?

Hexel Colorado On Page 5 of the Mobility 2045 Update, Executive Summary, next to TECHNOLOGY, it says "Analyze crashes to find room for safety improvement". For analyzing crashes, does NCTCOG utilize the Crash Analysis Studio developed by Strong Towns?

a minute ago

Reply Flag

fighting the good fight in the public comments box

Hexel Colorado On Page 5 of the Mobility 2045 Update, one of the bubbles under Infrastructure Maintenance says "Existing roadways: maintained to ensure their reliability and maximize their useful life." Does NCTCOG make it a priority to actively seek out opportunities for road diets, even on roads where constituents have yet to request it? (i.e. roadways that are purely thoroughfares may not have local residents & businesses to request it

a caller mentions that many lights put pedestrians in the place of crossing during green lights - eg left turning cars getting a left turn signal at the same time pedestrians get a cross. Also says that people don't listen to anti-cell phone PSAs, and we should do more on that

i love this woman. she also proposes free/reduced DART/DCTA/TM fares on ozone alert days

in response to Hexel's question about actively seeking out road diet options, NCTCOG says no, they mostly look at trying to optimize freeways and tollways without reconstructing them. they do mention that they look at context-sensitive complete streets

I asked about their "changes to HOV lanes" segment and how that relates to their Ozone goals. they cite the idea that it reduces congestion thereby reducing emissions (we know this one is false. adding space for more cars just gets more cars stuck in traffic, not less traffic)

Hexel calls in lmao. We've all been there. He asks about reducing job sprawl, citing an article showing that Dallas has one of the highest rates of job sprawl in the country. He calls out land use reforms to enable less driving, or more walk/bike/bus trips.

He calls out the focus on driver behavior for road safety (which again, we know *does not work*), and says that we could put that effort into pushing modal shift, calling modal shift "the only fundamental solution."

"as the son of an immigrant, i can say we don't necessarily drive because we want to, or because we enjoy it, or because we're good at it, but because we have to."

I feel this. A friend of mine, bad driver, used to work in flower mound. I worried for them every day they worked.

But they didn't have any options.

Says "as long as we equate population to traffic, we will never solve traffic." (it's true. more population can give you the ability to build even better transit options, instead of ever more deadly roads)

NCTCOG says they do have programs trying to address job sprawl and lack of density, trying to work with local communities on land use. Says they have a sustainable development group trying to reduce the need for people to go the entire way across DFW for work

Also say they're looking at expanding broad band access to allow people who might otherwise drive a long distance to work from home, and laying bike trails that can connect to jobs, trying to "give people options."

I didn't realize it was "roast NCTCOG" day today.

Question: "If speeds went up during covid due to less traffic, which led to more deaths, have we looked at reducing speeds"

NCTCOG: "so we could look at roads, then have partners look at them, then maybe go in and change"

Hexel asks about removing the laws that require the oceans of ugly parking that we see around the region. They say they have someone working on that. Also this comment from Hexel. (staff says they're not aware of the development somehow?)

Hexel Colorado A recent development that, in my opinion, is a failure in land use & transportation planning, is the announcement of Universal Studios in Frisco. With no connections to any form of mass transit, this is going to be a huge traffic generator. Will likely employ low-wage workers from across metroplex who can't afford to live in Frisco. Plans show sea of surface parking lots surrounding the planned development.

How did NCTCOG allow this to happen?

Regional Safety Update - Comments

I am pleased that the COG considers this topic a priority.

pg. 5 of handout - Reduce deaths on Texas Roadways -
by half by 2035 and to zero by 2050 - I think the schedule needs to be more aggressive. I realize that a lot of planning and analysis needs to be done to achieve these goals, however the target dates for these reductions should be sooner. Also, a benchmark for 2028 (5 years from now) needs to be developed. This issue is too important to push this off to the distant future.

page 10 of handout - I agree with all the "enhance safety" factors. I am particularly interested in controlling ~~texting~~ while driving and improving bicycle and pedestrian safety.

I would like to see more emphasis placed in making it safe for pedestrians to cross streets at traffic signals. Time should be given for pedestrians to cross prior to cars turning into the pedestrian crossing. A few examples in North Dallas are; Preston Road at Forest Lane and the shopping centers immediately south and immediately north of Forest Lane. Another example is at Preston Road and Royal Lane, along with the intersections immediately to the north and south of Royal Lane. As of my last trip to ^{the} Preston and Royal ^{area} a few weeks ago, the temporary traffic signals that were installed after the destruction of the October 2019 tornado had not been replaced with permanent traffic signals. The temporary signals do not have

all the safety features as the permanent signals. Also, the hardware involved with the temporary signals take up more room on the ground, making it difficult for pedestrians and wheelchair users to navigate when crossing the street. Note: these temporary traffic signals are at the shopping center intersection immediately to the north of Royal Lane.

Question: I would be interested to know when the permanent traffic signals will be installed. It has already been more than 3 years since the tornado.

Comments:

As for the use of cell phones, I have observed that the majority of motorists either text or speak on the phone at red lights. Although they are not moving the vehicle at that time, texting and talking on the phone serves as a distraction from the responsibility of driving safely.

pg. 7 of handout - I would like to see the development of techniques to prevent wrongway driving. Too many innocent lives are lost due to these tragedies.

I agree with the participant at the February 6, 2023 public meeting who suggested that there would be fewer car crashes if fewer people had to rely on their vehicles for transportation. If public transportation was more reliable and if it was easier to get to and from bus stops and rail stations, more people would rely on transit.

I previously submitted the enclosed transcription of an NPR interview about Hoboken, New Jersey, where there have been zero traffic deaths in 4 years. Since this transcript is in line with the Regional Safety Update, I am submitting it again.

Status of 2022 Transportation Conformity Determination - Received

Comments

I think that the general public needs more education about what creates the ozone formation shown on slide 4. On days when the ozone is at a dangerous level, years ago it was reported in the media that it was an ozone alert day. Fares on public transportation were either free or reduced on those days. The fare reduction or elimination created increased awareness on the part of the public.

During our February 6 meeting, one of the presenters reported that computer and cell phone alerts go out to people on those days with high ozone. This is fine, but it is my understanding that people have to sign up to receive these alerts. If this is true, then the people who receive these alerts already have an awareness of air quality issues. We need to target people who are not aware of the magnitude of the problem. Education can be through television, radio, print (newspapers and magazines) and advertising on the sides and back of buses. It would be appropriate for the television news to have short lessons on air quality issues, including the dangers of ozone and its effect on the environment and our lives. I recently saw a lesson about the dangers of carbon dioxide in the air on the local CBS news station. We need to learn about these topics more often.

Phyllis Silver 2/22/2023



Phyllis Silver

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NATIONAL

How a New Jersey city has achieved 0 traffic deaths in 4 years

August 1, 2022 · 4:28 PM ET
Heard on All Things Considered



ARI SHAPIRO

MEGAN LIM



PATRICK JARENWATTANANON

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With motor vehicle traffic fatalities rising, NPR's Ari Shapiro talks with Hoboken Director of Transportation and Parking Ryan Sharp on how Hoboken, N.J., has had zero traffic deaths in four years.

ARI SHAPIRO, HOST:

What if you could get traffic fatalities down to zero? Well, the city of Hoboken, N.J., just across the river from New York City, seems to have done it. Nobody there has died from a collision with a car in four years. Ryan Sharp is here to explain how they made that happen. He is Hoboken director of transportation and parking. Welcome to ALL THINGS CONSIDERED.

RYAN SHARP: Thank you for having me. It's a pleasure.

SHAPIRO: So according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, almost 43,000 people in the U.S. died in motor vehicle traffic crashes last year. That is the highest number since 2005. So while numbers all over the country were going up, how did Hoboken get the number to zero?

SHARP: That's a great question. Hoboken has been playing a long game when it comes to traffic safety for a number of years, dating back before COVID, and playing the long game through incremental changes and improvements over a series of years.

SHAPIRO: So you're talking about incremental changes and improvements. Like, if you and I were going for a walk through downtown Hoboken, what are some of the specific things we would see that have made a difference?

SHARP: Well, a lot of the things that Hoboken has been doing to improve traffic safety are low-cost. They're quick implementation, but they're also high impact. So we know through our crash data that about 88% of crashes happen at intersections. So we have focused on trying to reduce conflicts at our intersections, especially in our high crash corridors, so things like trying to improve sightlines at corners by doing what we call daylighting. So that can be installing something as simple as what we call a vertical delineator post or a flexible bollard. These posts get installed within 25 feet of crosswalks, and they physically restrict cars from parking right up against a crosswalk.

SHAPIRO: So it's not a blind corner. If you're going to take a turn, somebody is going to see you. If you're going to cross a street, you can spot the cars that are coming.

SHARP: That's correct. It's a very simple, cost-effective thing you can do, but it has a big impact. One thing that you won't see is something called a leading pedestrian interval. And basically what that means is we've programmed our traffic signals to give pedestrians a few-second head start when they get into the crosswalk during their pedestrian phase without having to worry about turning vehicles.

SHAPIRO: Oh yeah, I've seen that here in D.C., too. The walk light turns on before the green light goes. Your plan seems to de-emphasize car ownership and create space for pedestrians and cyclists. How often do you hear from drivers who feel like you're squeezing them out? And what do you tell them?

SHARP: Well, the goal of the Vision Zero program is to focus on safety for all modes of transportation. What we know, though, through our crash data, is that pedestrians and cyclists in particular are the most vulnerable users of the streets in Hoboken. And that's pretty much the same for every city in the country. And so culturally, people

elevate pedestrian safety in Hoboken at the top of the hierarchy. So even if you commute to work by car, at some point you're going to be a pedestrian in Hoboken. So we try to not pit any one mode against each other as much as possible.

SHAPIRO: There are a lot of cities that have implemented Vision Zero programs to reduce traffic fatalities. But in places like Washington, D.C., deaths have actually increased since that goal was announced. What makes Hoboken different?

SHARP: Well, it's hard to speculate what's working well or not working well in other cities. But in Hoboken, an incremental approach over several years that includes more than just engineering, but also education and a focus on changing the culture. The simple improvements like daylighting or leading pedestrian intervals or adding curb extensions, these things are still in place, and they've been having a positive impact. And people have gotten used to seeing these things in town, and they ask for more. So it's continuing to build off its own success. And, you know, frankly, we've been fortunate so far not to have a setback, but that can happen any time, right? We're well aware of that. It's happened in other cities. So we're continuing to push ahead with new initiatives again and again to try to continue to keep that progress in place.

SHAPIRO: That is Ryan Sharp, Hoboken's director of transportation and parking. Thanks a lot.

SHARP: Thank you.

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Feb. 2023
For Submission with
Comments on
Regional Safety Update
Phyllis
Silver

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