



# MAY 2016 REPORT

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## VISION ZERO ANCHORAGE



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## Executive Summary

On average, one person is injured in a car crash every day in Anchorage. A person walking is hit by a car in Anchorage on average every three days. Also, a person on a bike is hit by a car on average every three days (Municipality of Anchorage Traffic Data, 2013).

Is this level of traffic safety and risk acceptable to Anchorage residents?

Vision Zero is a community commitment to reduce the loss of life and major injuries on roadways to zero. This is a data-driven and coordinated approach with five major focus areas, often referred to as the five Es:

- Engineering/Infrastructure
- Education
- Evaluation
- Enforcement
- Encouragement

Streets should be safe for everyone – people on foot, in cars, using public transit, and on bikes. Vision Zero puts the safety of human life above all else.

A public involvement process was conducted to determine the level of interest/concern from Anchorage residents regarding traffic safety, and whether Vision Zero is the appropriate approach to address traffic safety. The process included four components:

- Research
- Town hall meetings
- An online survey
- Steering committee review

Bike Anchorage, an Anchorage bike advocacy orga-

nization, hired Denali Daniels & Associates, Inc. (DDA) in November 2015 to gather public input, research policies in other cities, and facilitate a steering committee discussion about findings.

In February 2016, Mayor Ethan Berkowitz invited a diverse group of organizations representing a broad range of Anchorage stakeholders to form a Vision Zero Steering Committee. The steering committee provided guidance on outreach, events, and policy recommendations.

On March 3, 2016, the Mayor launched Vision Zero Anchorage at the University of Alaska. This event served as the kickoff for the public involvement process. On March 30 and April 2, 2016, Vision Zero Anchorage hosted two (2) community town hall meetings for the general public. An online survey to solicit broader public participation ran from March 30 to April 19, 2016.

The town hall and survey input was compiled, presented, and reviewed by the steering committee at a four-hour face-to-face meeting on April 20, 2016. The steering committee considered public input and research, providing further guidance on recommendations and next steps.

Input received through this process framed key traffic safety issues in Anchorage, and supported a strong interest in Vision Zero and the 5 Es as the appropriate model to address those issues. The results of this effort support the development of a long range strategic plan for Vision Zero to include:

1. Agency Coordination
2. Municipal Code Assessment
3. Public Media Campaign
4. Professional Development

The final step of this process is a presentation on this report at the Mayor's Conference Room in City Hall on May 3, 2016.

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## Introduction

Vision Zero is an initiative with the goal of eliminating traffic fatalities and serious injuries for all road users over a given time frame. This report summarizes an initial phase of Anchorage’s Vision Zero conducted in spring 2016: research, town hall meetings, online survey, and steering committee review.

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## Research and Background

Vision Zero was created in Sweden in the 1990s, and since 1997 Sweden has seen a 30% decrease in traffic fatalities while the number of trips taken has increased.

The primary goal of Vision Zero is to eliminate traffic fatalities and serious injuries and emphasize that no loss of life is acceptable. The initiative expands the perception of who is responsible for safety on our streets from individuals (people who bike, walk, drive, and take public transportation) to the community as a whole and the social norms in place. Recognizing that human error is always possible, Vision Zero policies aim to minimize opportunities for error and the consequences when they occur. Vision Zero is a community effort, and to achieve success, traffic engineers, police officers, health professionals, stakeholders, and advocates all must work to-

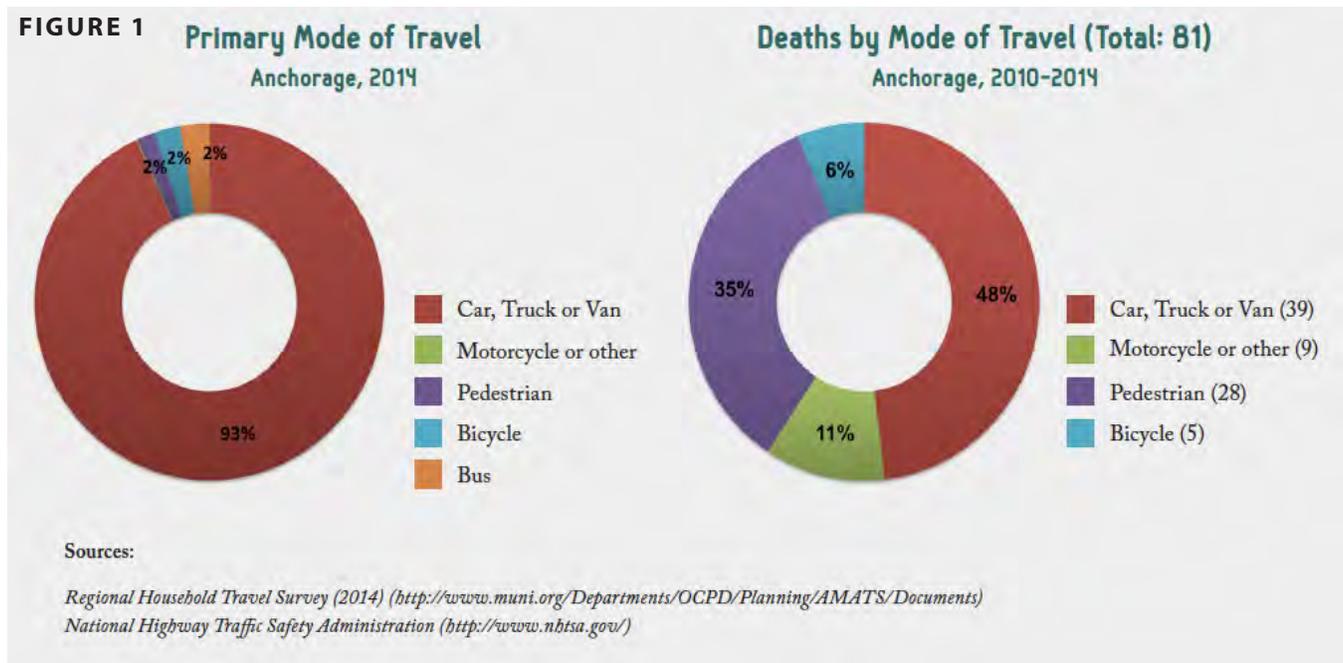
gether toward the same goal.

According to the Vision Zero Network, a national organization committed to helping communities reach their Vision Zero goals, the following nine components have proven to be an effective high-level framework for a strong Vision Zero initiative:

- Political commitment
- Action plan
- Community engagement
- Cooperation and collaboration
- Multi-disciplinary leadership
- Equity
- Systems-based approach
- Data-driven
- Transparency

In the United States, Vision Zero was first adopted by New York City in 2013 and by January 2016 the city saw a 22% reduction in traffic fatalities. Fifteen (15) other U.S. cities have adopted Vision Zero since 2013 and another seventeen (17) are actively considering the initiative.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, there were 81 traffic fatalities in Anchorage between 2010 and 2014. **Although 5% of people walk, bike, and ride motorcycles as their primary mode of transportation in Anchorage, combined they make up 52% of the traffic fatalities** (Source: Regional Household Travel Survey, 2014, and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration).



The Vision Zero initiative supports Mayor Berkowitz's priority of creating a safe, secure, strong Anchorage, and more specifically:

1. Safety for cars, motorcycles, pedestrians, bikes, and public transportation;
2. Creative new partnerships across organizations and institutions; and
3. Use of data to ground policy changes.

There are many efforts underway in Anchorage that fold in with the goal and focus areas of Vision Zero:

- Anchorage Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans include 541 miles of trails and bike lanes planned by 2028 (\$1.7 million programmed for 2016-2018)
- Anchorage Metropolitan Area Transportation Solutions (AMATS) has \$2.1 million obligated for design and construction of nine road projects that will be constructed in summer 2016 and summer 2017
- Federal Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) funding towards Vision Zero program (\$900,000)
- Spenard Road redesign, to include updates to bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure along the corridor
- Anchorage Bowl Land Use Plan
- Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF): Toward Zero Deaths statewide strategic plan, including performance measures and ongoing evaluation



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## Kickoff

Vision Zero Anchorage had a successful launch event with Mayor Ethan Berkowitz at the University of Alaska Anchorage's Rasmuson Hall on March 3, 2016. The launch had over 75 individuals in attendance and kicked off the public involvement process.

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## Town Hall Meetings

The town hall meetings were held at the Fairview Recreation Center on Wednesday, March 30, 2016, from 6-8 p.m., with 38 people in attendance, and Z. J. Loussac Library on Saturday, April 2, 2016, from 1-3 p.m., with 25 in attendance.

The town hall meetings began with an overview presentation on the Vision Zero initiative, followed by gathering of individual input then small group discussions on solutions. Public input was gathered using open-ended questions:

1. What do you LIKE about traffic safety in Anchorage? What is working? Are there new and innovative things happening that you want to share?
2. What do you NOT like so much about traffic safety in Anchorage? Do you face issues, challenges or barriers that you think need to be addressed?

The second half of the meeting was an in-depth group discussion about specific traffic safety issues around each of the 5 Es and potential solutions or actions to improve the issue(s).



## SUMMARY OF TOWN HALL PUBLIC INPUT

All comments were collected and have been organized and documented in the appendix. The following provides a summary level recap of the input received.

### What do town hall participants **LIKE** about traffic safety?

- Engineering comments focused on the benefits of trails, light traffic, count-down crosswalks, lighting, and roundabouts, among others.
- Positive comments on education concentrated on the school Bikeology program, Bike Anchorage programs, and courteous drivers.
- On enforcement, town hall participants were in favor of recent changes to law, including harsher punishments for cell phone use while driving and increased ability for cyclists to use the lane when necessary.
- The encouragement category had positive comments on community partnerships, increase in people who bike and walk, and a supportive Mayor.
- Positive evaluation comments were on clear benchmarks and goals, and innovative evaluation methods.

### What do town hall participants **DISLIKE** about traffic safety?

- Town hall participants disliked Anchorage's performance in the following engineering topics: road/winter maintenance, the need for more bike lanes, sidewalks, and crosswalks, lack of lane markings, and the connectivity of bike and pedestrian infrastructure.
- On education, town hall participants identified a lack of knowledge and need to increase awareness of bike and pedestrian laws, insufficient funding for education and aggressive drivers.
- Enforcement comments concentrated on the detriments of high speed limits, frequent speeding and red light running, and lack of police enforcement.
- Dislikes under encouragement focused on the us vs. them mentality, lack of money, and the need for more sidewalks, especially around schools.
- Town hall participants disliked the traffic timing system, the poor visibility of people on bikes and walking in the winter; and expressed the need to identify high-risk locations, more bike counter data, and combine trauma data with crash reports.

## Online Survey

### DESIGN

The survey design followed the town hall structure around the 5 Es of Vision Zero: Engineering, Education, Enforcement, Evaluation, and Encouragement. Questions were designed to gauge public opinion on potential policies.

The survey consisted of 22 questions. Of the 22 questions, one was multiple choice, thirteen (13) were Likert-type rating scale, and eight (8) were open-ended short-answer. The multiple choice question was used to determine the primary mode of transportation used by the respondent. The Likert-type rating scale design was used to determine the strength of positive or negative public opinion around traffic safety and conditions and potential focus areas of Vision Zero. Open-ended questions were employed to elicit additional information about the respondent's views on traffic safety in Anchorage.

An online survey tool was developed through Google Forms and a beta version of the survey was tested with the Vision Zero Steering Committee.

The survey was released on March 30, 2016, with responses accepted until April 19, 2016.

A drawing for 20,000 Alaska Airlines miles was offered as an incentive to promote input.

Significant effort was made to have the survey sample closely reflect the population of Anchorage residents. The sample drew from Anchorage residents accessed through the Vision Zero Anchorage listserv, steering committee organization outreach, town hall meetings attendance, other local organization outreach, and the following Facebook pages: Vision Zero Anchorage, DDA, Bike Anchorage, Anchorage Women’s Commission, Mayor Berkowitz, and several shares from other pages. A total of 503 individuals responded to the survey.

### ANALYSIS

The multiple choice and Likert-type rating scale questions of the survey were compiled and analyzed.

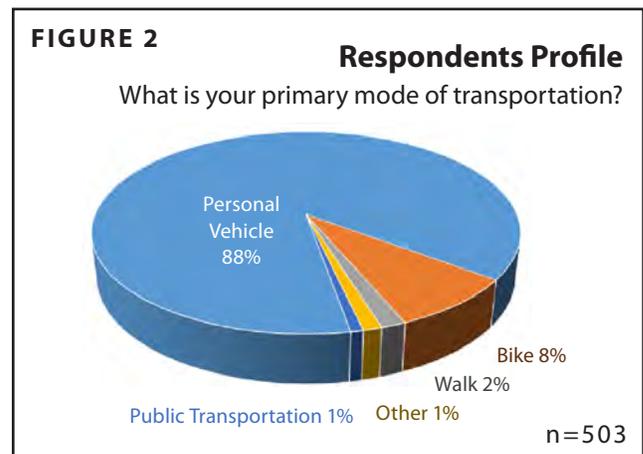
The multiple choice question responses were totaled and used to create a pie chart displaying what percent of respondents reflected each mode of transportation: per-

sonal vehicle, walk, bike, public transportation, and other.

For the analysis of the Likert-type rating scale questions, the number of responses to each rating value were totaled first. Those totals were then divided by the total overall responses to determine the percent of respondents for each rating level on each question. The responses were also averaged so that comparisons could be made across responses to questions on similar subjects (safety, conditions, and the 5 Es).

### SUMMARY OF SURVEY RESULTS

Reflective of known trends, a significant majority of survey respondents use a personal vehicle and a small amount of survey respondents use public transportation or another form of transportation as their primary mode of transportation (Figure 2). People who bike were moderately over-represented relative to their proportion of the population.



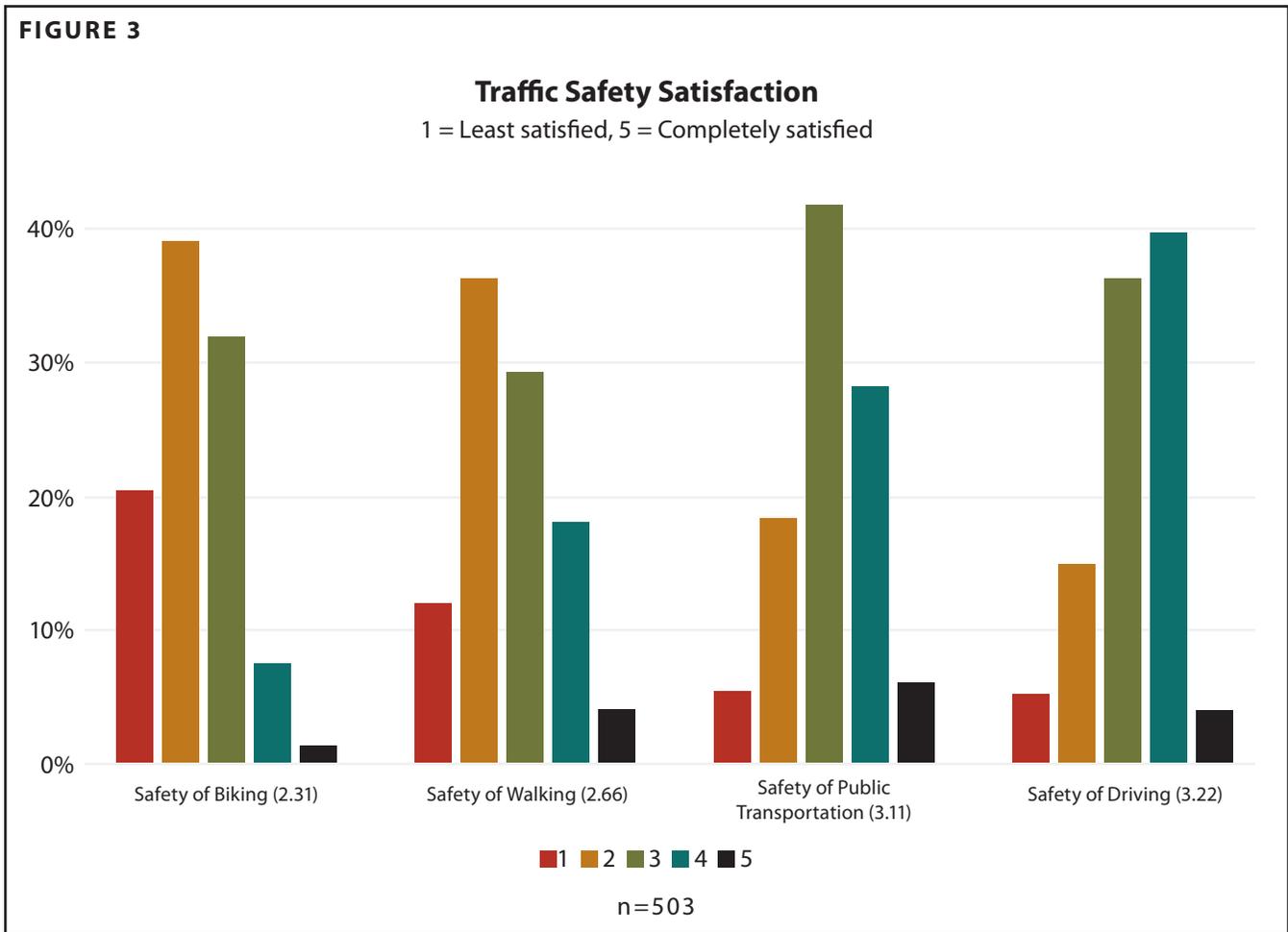
### Attitudes Regarding Traffic Safety and Conditions Today

Survey respondents reported varying levels of satisfaction with Anchorage’s transportation landscape. In general, respondents were more satisfied with all conditions for drivers (safety, road conditions, and traffic management) than with other forms of transportation, where routes and safety scored relatively poorly for cyclists and pedestrians. Public transportation responses were more spread, scoring relatively highly on safety, but lower on availability/access (Figures 3 and 4).

### SAFETY

A majority of respondents were dissatisfied with the safety of biking in Anchorage, with approximately 60% of respondents rating their satisfaction level as a 1 or 2 out of

**FIGURE 3**



5. Fewer than 10% reported feeling satisfied (Figure 3).

Though somewhat more balanced, the level of satisfaction for the safety of walking was more negative than positive: 48% of respondents scored walking safety at a 1 or 2, compared to 22% reporting a 4 or 5 (Figure 3).

Respondents were moderately satisfied with the safety of public transportation in Anchorage, only 24% reported a 1 or 2 level of satisfaction, while 34% reported a 4 or 5 (Figure 3).

Relative to the alternatives, respondents were fairly satisfied with driving safety. Respondents were more satisfied (4 or 5) than dissatisfied (1 or 2) by about 44% to 20% (Figure 3).

### CONDITIONS

The level of satisfaction for access to public transportation, non-motorized transportation routes, and road conditions was more negative than positive. Fifty percent of respondents scored access to public transportation at a 1 or 2, compared to about 19% reporting a 4 or 5. On access

to non-motorized routes, 42% of respondents reported a 1 or 2, compared to 26% reporting a 4 or 5. Responses to road conditions were 31% negative to 23% positive. Management of traffic flow scored much closer to even, 31% positive to 32% negative (Figure 4).

### ***The Five Es: Views on the relative importance of each Vision Zero focus area***

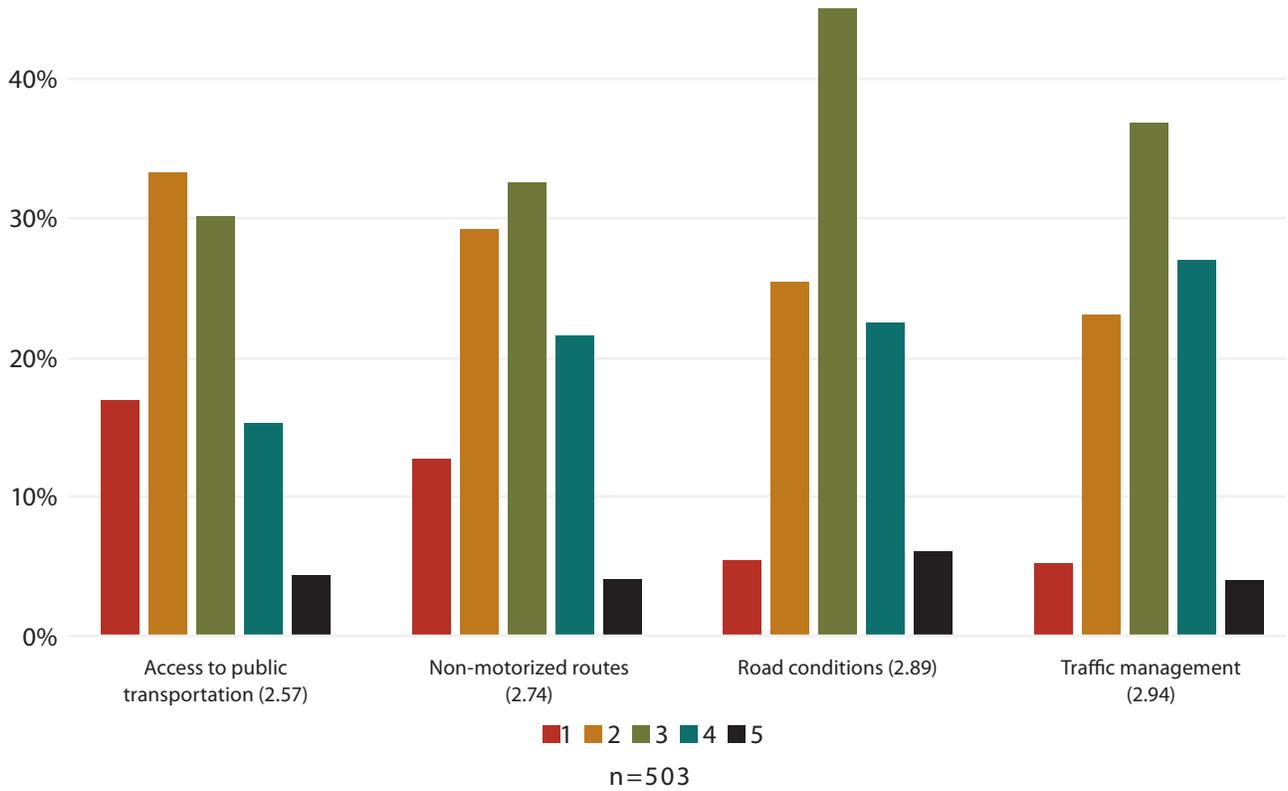
Respondents clearly believe that each of the five Es (Engineering, Education, Evaluation, Enforcement, and Encouragement) are important focus areas for reaching zero traffic fatalities (Figure 5).

Engineering scored the highest, averaging a 4.6, with 67% scoring its importance as 5 out of 5, and more than 90% responding with a 4 or 5. Education and Enforcement were next highest, both with an average score of 4.26 and more than 80% scoring them a 4 or a 5. Evaluation and Encouragement were close behind, averaging 4.21 and 4.13 respectively.

**FIGURE 4**

### Traffic Conditions Satisfaction

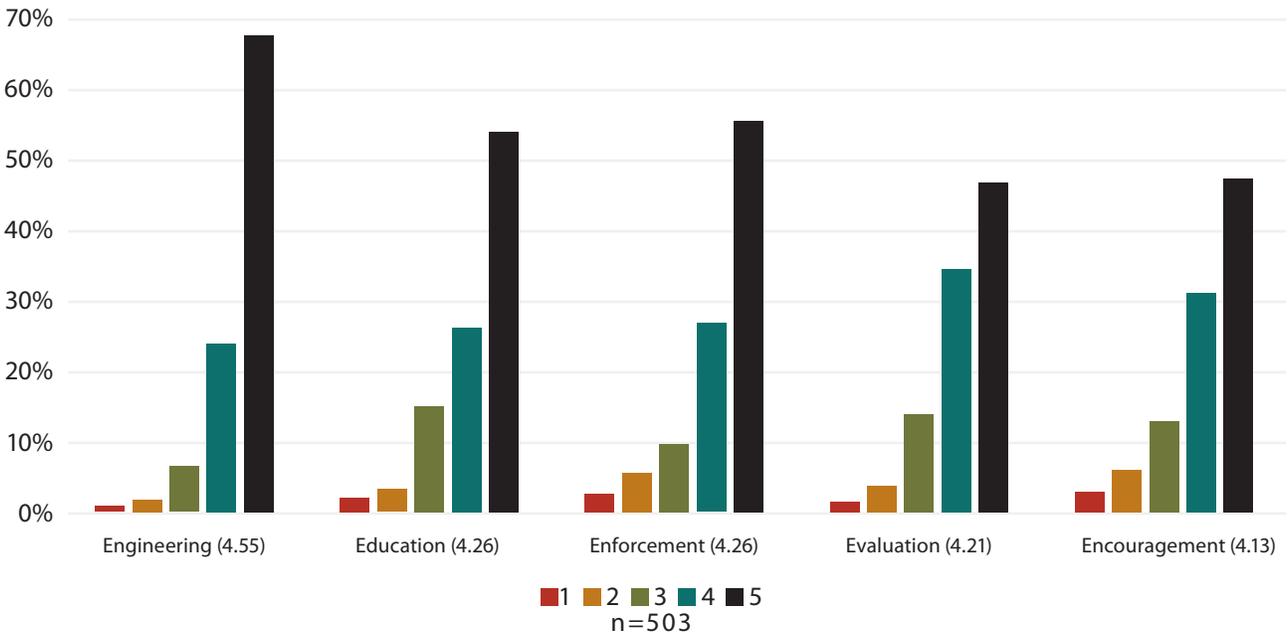
1 = Least satisfied, 5 = Completely satisfied



**FIGURE 5**

### Importance of the 5 Es

1 = Not important at all, 5 = Extremely important



## Open-ended questions

The open-ended questions were reviewed for noteworthy suggestions, which were included in the presentation to the steering committee at the face-to-face meeting. Open-ended responses are available in raw data format in the appendices.

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## Steering Committee

In February 2016 the Mayor invited organizations to form a steering committee for Vision Zero. The purpose of the steering committee was to ensure that the public involvement process for Vision Zero was representative of a broad and diverse range of Anchorage residents, to reach out to their stakeholders and communities, and to provide recommendations for next steps with Vision Zero Anchorage. The steering committee included representatives from the following organizations:

- Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities
- Alaska Injury Prevention Center
- Alaska Institute for Justice
- Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium
- Anchorage Senior Activity Center
- Anchorage Women's Commission
- Bike Anchorage
- Catholic Social Services
- Denali Daniels & Associates, Inc. – Contractor
- Disability Law Center of Alaska
- Hope Community Resources
- Municipality of Anchorage (AMATS, Traffic department, Office of Economic and Community Development)
- University of Alaska Anchorage

The steering committee held regular teleconference meetings throughout the public involvement process to assist with the planning and logistics of the launch event, town hall meetings, and online survey.

On Wednesday, April 20, 2016, the steering committee met face to face at the Mayor's Conference Room in City Hall. At that meeting, the steering committee reviewed findings of the public input and policy research, providing further input on next steps.

The following findings are offered:

\* = added emphasis by the number of steering committee members who believe this recommendation is one of the top three actions

## ENGINEERING

- Adopt and implement current design standards, particularly Complete Streets\*\*\*
- Codes, plans, policies support each other\*\*
- Increase number of pedestrian crossings\*
- Install more protected bike lanes, bikeways\*
- Change the timing of traffic lights
- Identify, analyze, and redesign high-risk locations
- Increase street lighting
- Paint with retro-reflectivity markings
- Promote construction coordination
- Repair uneven sidewalks, ADA
- Promote traffic calming projects
- Increase pavement and winter maintenance
- More multi-channel education for the public on engineering steps that are already being taken
- Context-sensitive design
- Community readiness
- Funding for maintenance
- Report what's already happening, use innovative ways to share info with public
- Continuing education for engineers, bring other transportation professionals together: Complete Streets, NACTO, Context-Sensitive design

## EDUCATION

- Implement a public safety messaging campaign, including identifying audiences (special population\*\*) and issues based on data\*\*\*\*\*
- Use Mayor to coordinate messaging, draw attention to existing efforts\*\*\*
- Use media coverage to education on traffic safety, existing and planned projects\*
- More bike and pedestrian information in driver's education and DMV manual
- More traffic safety education for K-12
- Appropriate signage throughout the city to ensure understanding of bike and pedestrian laws
- Create transportation system user guides
- NACTO training for AMATS and DOT staff

- Grow the number of agencies working together
- Strategic, effective effort, not just more of everything. Determine the issues of greatest risk
- Include adults in education efforts
- Measure effectiveness of education campaigns
- Target administration, legislators, community leaders to raise awareness
- Work with City staff and professional drivers to become exemplars of traffic safety

## ENFORCEMENT

- Community readiness for all of Vision Zero\*\*\*\*
- Promote retention and recruitment of police officers to increase staffing for expanded traffic enforcement\*
- Recognize political sensitivity around speed cameras and red light cameras and explore ways to educate public on speeding and red light running (ask Legal about specific codes around cameras, include ongoing research from UAA)
- Lower traffic speed limits where appropriate
- Install more speed feedback signs
- Regular training of officers on laws relating to all transportation modes
- Increase high-visibility enforcement and corridor safety patrols
- Expanded enforcement on all modes, funding needed
- Codes, plans, policies support each other

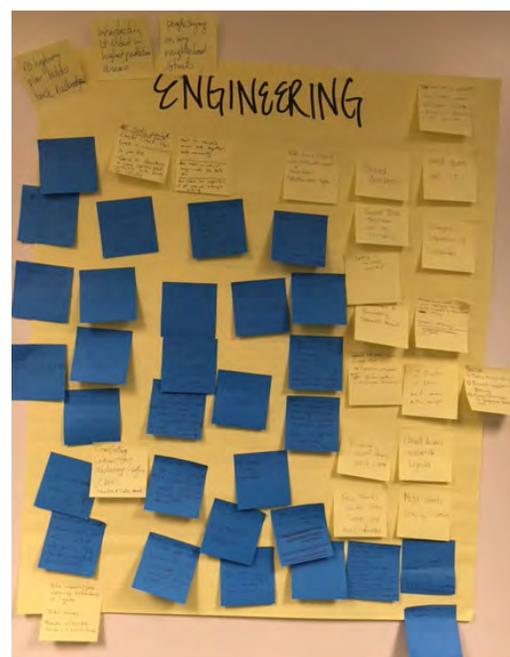
## EVALUATION

- Conduct interdisciplinary annual review of high priority safety improvement needs and aggregate into an accessible centralized location\*
- Track traffic fatalities and serious injuries and publish online in a timely manner
- Track and publish walking and biking volume data, install digital automated counters at key locations
- Work with Trauma Registry to combine trauma data with police crash reports
- Use crash data to identify traffic safety “hot spots” and unsafe behaviors
- Determine how to present data to public, including sensitivity with data
- Identify gaps: EMS data, trails collisions, multiple

- data systems, inventory of existing datasets
- Tool created for self-reporting: education on use of existing tools, create online tools – map
- Hansen infor (constituent services portal for management of requests, complaints, or concerns)
- Analysis of codes, plans, policies

## ENCOURAGEMENT

- Use existing programs, partnerships\*
- Encourage pedestrian outreach\*
- Promote Bike- and Walk-to-Work days
- Install more bike racks at high-demand locations
- Institute a bicycle and pedestrian wayfinding system Anchorage-wide
- Promote community rides
- Promote community walks and walk assessments
- Implement a Safe Routes to School program
- Include encouragement for special populations, reach out to low-income individuals, identify other involuntary bike and pedestrian transportation users
- Active transportation, health promotion
- Share local transportation information with new residents
- Highlight existing options
- Bike-friendly business membership, promotion
- Encourage relationships with transit and businesses





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## Conclusion

The following options for next steps are based on DDA's research, public input, and the feedback provided by the steering committee.

1. **Agency Coordination** - Creation of a Mayor's Vision Zero Task Force, comprised of representatives from relevant municipal, state, and federal agencies, which would be charged with:
  - a. Agency coordination on ongoing and future activities to promote Vision Zero best practices and data-driven approaches;
  - b. Leveraging respective in-kind and financial resources;
  - c. Coordination among respective planning efforts (i.e. Bike, Pedestrian, and Trails Plans); and
  - d. Development of a long range Vision Zero action plan.
2. **Municipal Code Assessment** - There are a number of inconsistent codes (federal/state/municipal) which create barriers to agencies in addressing policies supported by Vision Zero, in particular Complete Streets. The steering committee strongly suggested that this is a problem worth addressing. This could be a project of the Task Force, with support from either municipal staff or through a contractor.
3. **Public Safety Messaging Campaign** - Based on steering committee input, all five Es of Anchorage's Vision Zero should include an education or public media component. Before taking policy action, the public must first be ready and informed, particularly on changes in enforcement activity. To maintain the data-driven approach of this initiative, it is recommended that the public media campaign process include some baseline polling with metrics. A coordinated, data supported communications strategy would be most effective to identify goals, messages, audiences, and channels and to track progress.
4. **Professional Development** - Staff of agencies with membership in the Task Force should fully understand and be prepared to implement current best practices. Topical conferences, continuing education, and multi-departmental training can help to ensure this is occurring.

This phase of Vision Zero Anchorage determined that Vision Zero is the appropriate model to address traffic safety issues in Anchorage. The information gathered from research, town hall meetings, online survey, and steering committee review was critical in setting the stage for the recommendations on next steps. This will be useful as the Vision Zero Anchorage project moves forward to strategic planning and implementation.

This report was prepared by Denali Daniels & Associates, Inc. and funded by Bike Anchorage.