

# ANCHORAGE VISION ZERO YEAR 1 UPDATE

SEPTEMBER 2019

THE ONLY ACCEPTABLE  
NUMBER OF TRAFFIC  
DEATHS IS **ZERO**.



**VISION ZERO**  
ANCHORAGE



Dear Friends,

Anchorage launched its Vision Zero campaign in November 2018, bolstered by the hope and energy of city leaders, safer streets advocates, and the friends and families of people impacted by crashes. As we near the end of our first year, we see the road ahead with greater clarity.

This year, the Municipality completed 26 projects to improve roadway safety for all road users, banned texting while driving in school zones, assessed the potential of improvements through a pop-up demonstration project, and shared with the public through 14 community presentations. We collected a wealth of data to help us better target our efforts and make the soundest possible investments for Anchorage's Vision Zero future.

Anchorage roadways should be safer for everyone—pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists. Our goal is achieving zero traffic deaths, and we can by taking a data-driven and coordinated approach to designing safer streets, expanding public education, adopting and evaluating best practices, and enforcing effective laws.

Together, we will make Anchorage streets safer and more accessible for everyone. That's a shared vision and a realistic goal.

Regards,



Ethan Berkowitz



# INTRODUCTION

The Anchorage Vision Zero Action Plan was finalized in November 2018. This report, our first annual review, summarizes the past year's accomplishments, assesses fatal and severe injury traffic crash trends from 2015 to 2018, and identifies the work that still needs to be done.

It also emphasizes the role of Vision Zero and public health initiatives in helping create a more welcoming environment for people on foot, on bikes, and riding the bus. A successful transportation system in our community will encourage and enable more people to walk and cycle more often—the healthiest and most sustainable ways to travel.



Photo by Anna Bosin

# What Is Vision Zero?

Vision Zero is a commitment by leadership and the community to eliminate all traffic fatalities and severe injuries while increasing safe, healthy, equitable mobility for everyone. Vision Zero started in Sweden in 1997, where traffic fatalities have since dropped by 39%. There are now 44 US cities with adopted Vision Zero plans, a 32% increase over from 2018.

Vision Zero challenges us to reject the idea that deaths and life-altering injuries are an acceptable price for efficient travel; to recognize that they are preventable and, therefore, unacceptable.

For Vision Zero to succeed, we need everyone's help. There is no single solution. Actions and responsibilities fall first and

foremost on the designers of roadway systems, public health professionals, policymakers, and law enforcement; but individuals play a significant part by following laws and regulations.



**HUMAN LIFE  
AND HEALTH**  
ARE PRIORITIES IN  
OUR COMMUNITY.



TRAFFIC DEATHS AND  
SEVERE INJURIES ARE  
**PREVENTABLE.**



**WE ARE HUMAN  
AND MAKE MISTAKES.**  
THE ROADWAY SYSTEM SHOULD BE  
DESIGNED TO PROTECT US.

**SPEED IS A  
CRITICAL FACTOR**  
IN CRASH SEVERITY. THE MOST  
EFFECTIVE APPROACH IS TO  
SYSTEMATICALLY PRIORITIZE  
SAFETY OVER SPEED.



**RESPONSIBILITY  
IS SHARED**  
BETWEEN SYSTEM DESIGNERS  
AND ROAD USERS.





## What is the Anchorage Vision Zero Action Plan?

The Anchorage Vision Zero Action Plan is a three-year guiding document detailing the Municipality of Anchorage's commitment and approach to eliminating deaths and serious injuries on our roadways.

The plan presents extensive crash data and trends and identifies measurable strategies organized around five key themes:

### 1. Enhance processes and collaboration

Vision Zero is a new philosophy for managing transportation and requires a cultural shift. Internal changes (among staff and city leaders) and education are foundational to its success.

### 2. Build safer streets for everyone

Streets must be designed to be safer for everyone, no matter how they travel.

### 3. Reduce speed

Safer designs must also include safer speeds. In addition to roadway design, specific strategies need to be employed to reduce speed for the sake of safety.

### 4. Promote a culture of safety

Individual, institutional, and community education is integrated with enforcement strategies and changes to policies and legislation to build a culture of safety.

**Safer streets connect people to everyday destinations and healthier lifestyles.**



**Roads are public spaces.** Everyone should have the right to safely get to everyday destinations regardless of how they travel.



**Safer roads promote health.**

Activity-friendly routes motivate people to walk and bicycle, improving overall public health.



# YEAR 1 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In 2018, the Municipality's leadership and staff have demonstrated Anchorage's commitment to Vision Zero by advancing plans, policies and projects for safer, equitable multimodal travel. Through an approach that integrates data-driven decision-making, engineering, education, enforcement, and community engagement, the following accomplishments bring us closer to the goal of zero deaths and serious injuries for all road users in our community.



< AMATS and Bike Anchorage's Pop-Up on Denali Street allowed people to test drive, walk, and roll a temporary roundabout.

Source: Kittelson & Associates, Inc.

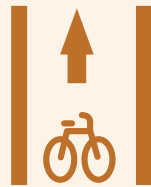
# 2018 BY THE NUMBERS



**7** pedestrian safety improvement projects



**3** bike lane projects



## Grant funding

to sustain Vision Zero for

**FOUR YEARS**

Thank you State of Alaska Health and Social Services!



**1** intercept survey



**2** core working group meetings



trail/  
pathway projects



**TWO!**

Vision Zero Task Force meetings



**1** pop-up project

Temporary Roundabouts  
Thanks, Bike Anchorage & AMATS!



**2018**  
MOA traffic report



roadway improvement projects

that include multi-modal facilities, new lighting and traffic calming

**4** street lighting projects



**1** **NEW LAW**

No handheld cell phone use in school zones.



**VISION ZERO** messaging

Roads for All and You Decide messaging strategies

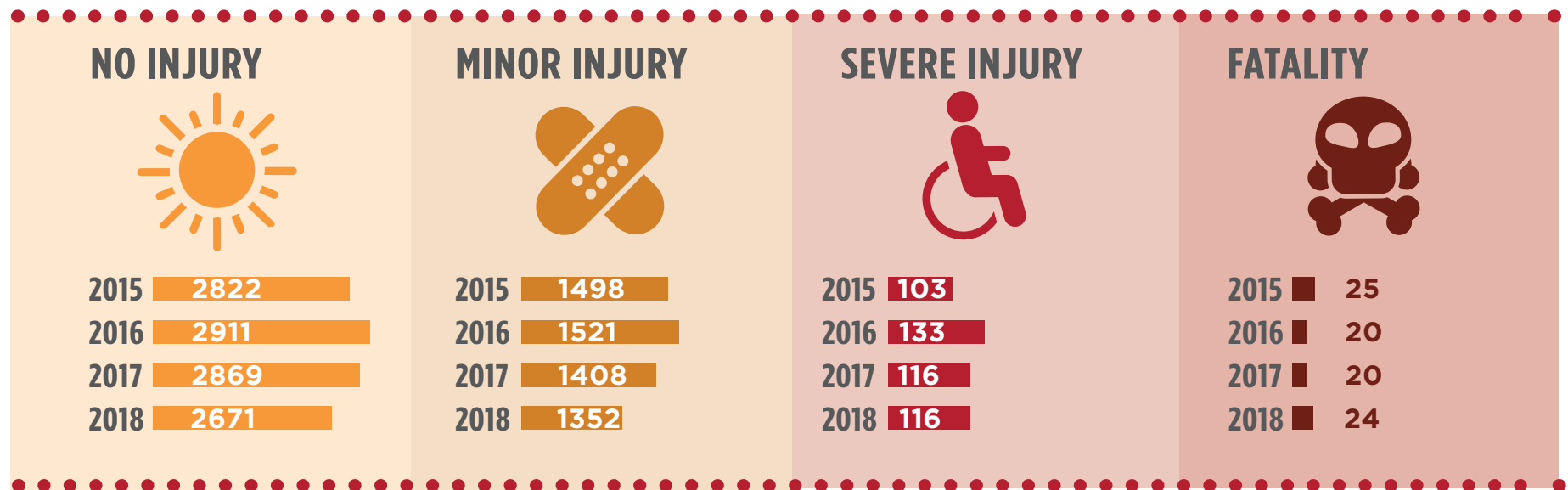


**14**  
educational presentations

# FATAL AND SEVERE INJURY TRAFFIC CRASH TRENDS

While much good work has been done, there are still challenges. Getting to zero fatalities is the ideal vision, continuous improvement is the minimum expectation. This means we need to continue to evaluate and address the underlying risk factors: where, how, and why serious crashes happen.

## 17,610 people experienced crashes in the past 4 years.

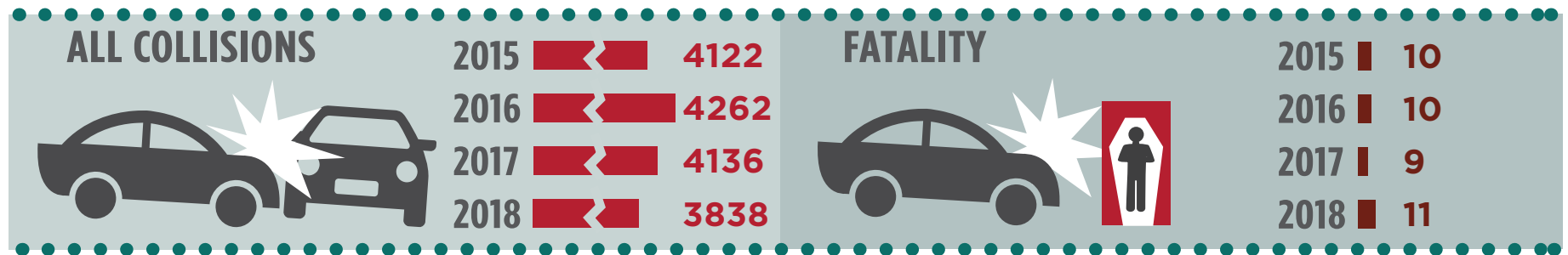


Source: MOA Annual Traffic Report, 2018

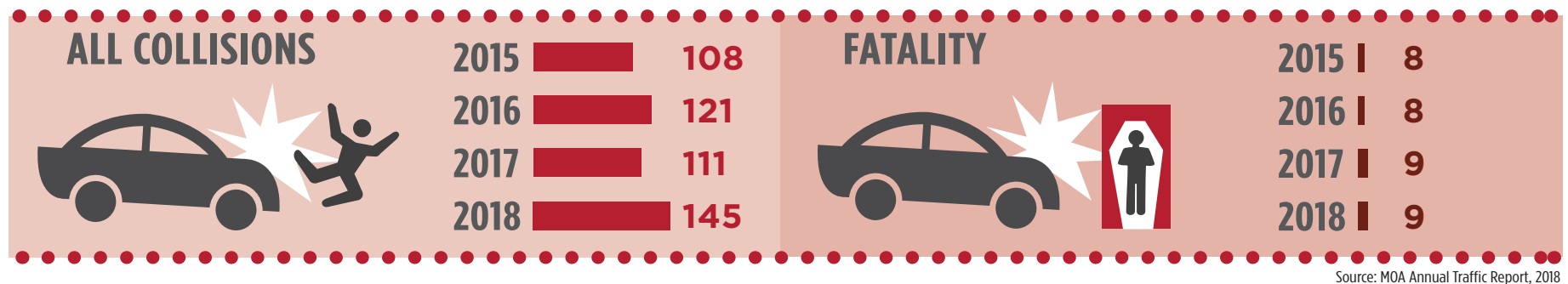


# 2018 crash statistics by mode

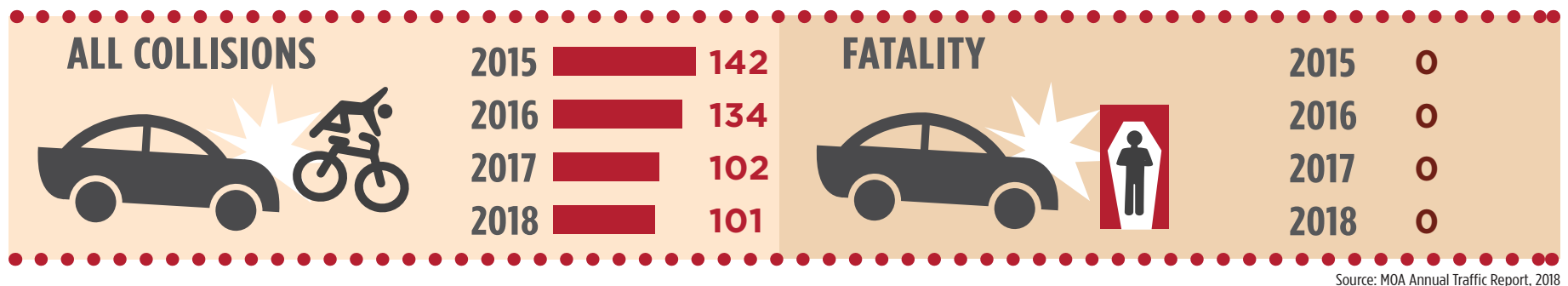
## VEHICLES (DRIVERS & PASSENGERS)



## PEDESTRIANS: 12 people were hit per month on average.

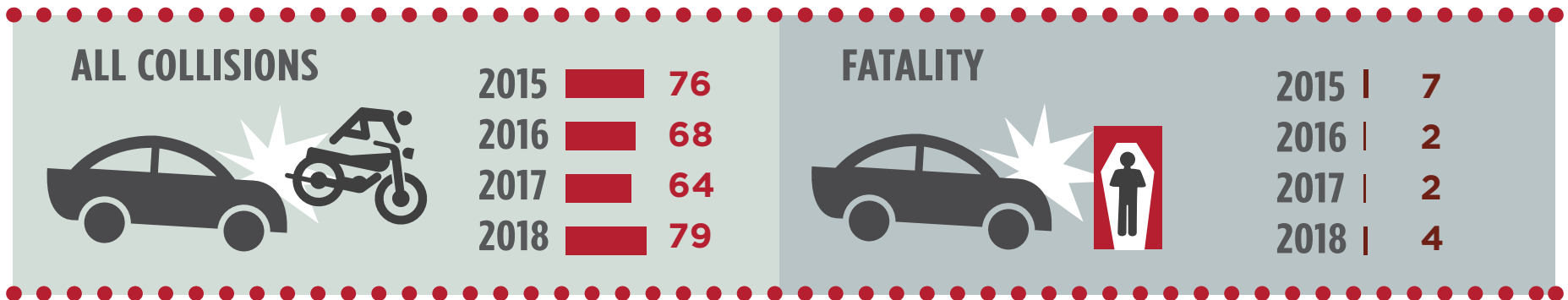


## BICYCLISTS: 8 people were hit per month on average.



# 2018 crash statistics by mode (cont'd)

**MOTORCYCLISTS:** Crashes are trending back up.



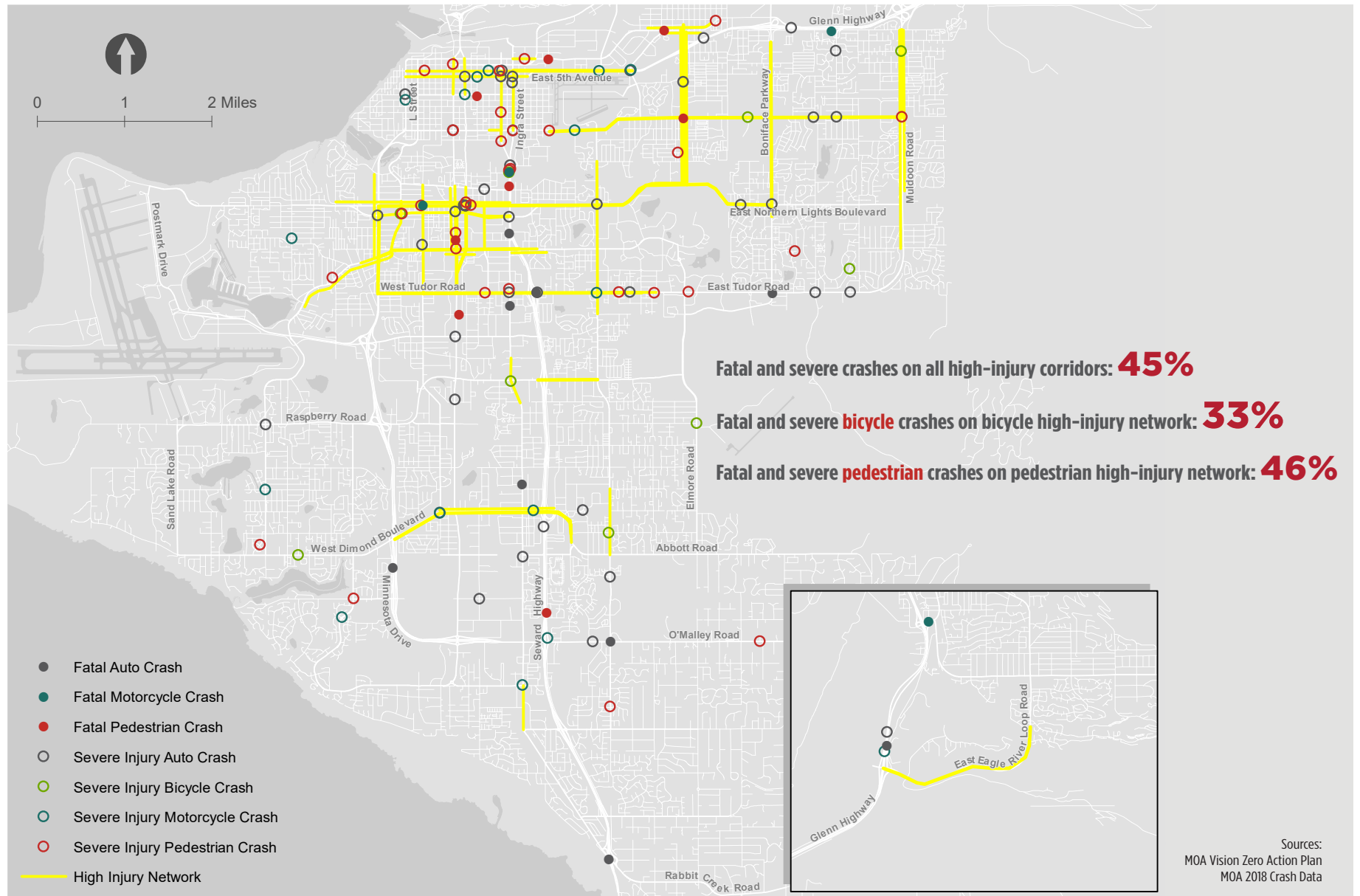
Source: MOA Annual Traffic Report, 2018

## 2018 most vulnerable road users



Source: MOA Annual Traffic Report, 2018

# High Injury Network





# 2018 fatal & severe crashes: what happened?

## BICYCLE TOTAL 9



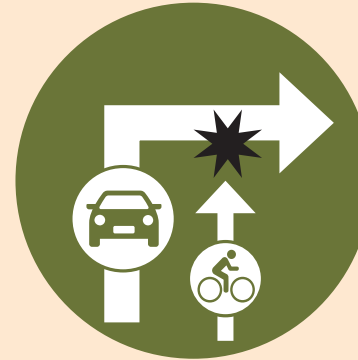
**22%**

driver ran red light



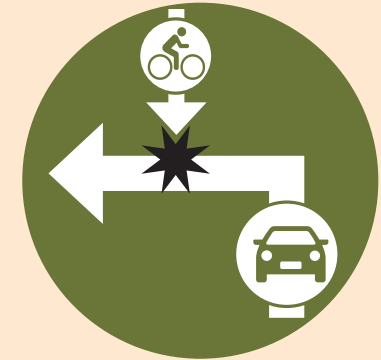
**22%**

driver impaired



**22%**

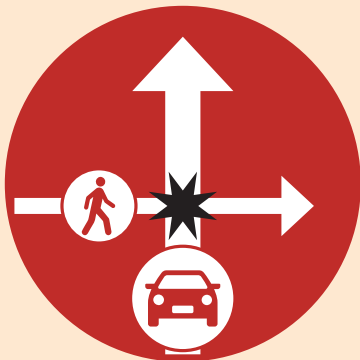
right hook (vehicle and bike traveling same direction, driver turns right into bike)



**22%**

driver hit bicycle on sidewalk

## PEDESTRIAN TOTAL 41



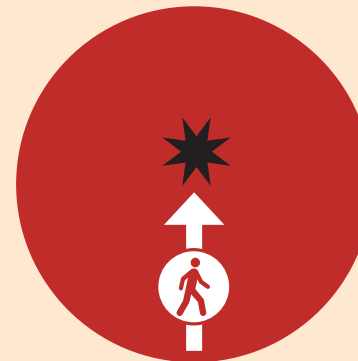
**24%**

person walking had right of way



**20%**

person crossing away from crosswalk



**15%**

actions of person walking are unknown



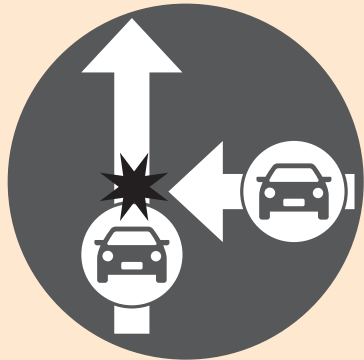
**7%**

person walking disregarded signal

Source: MOA 2018 Crash Data

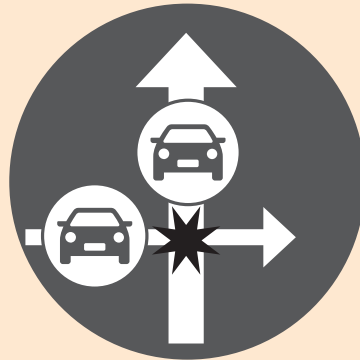
Municipality of Anchorage

## VEHICLE (AUTO NON-MOTORCYCLE, NON-PEDESTRIAN/BICYCLE) TOTAL 65



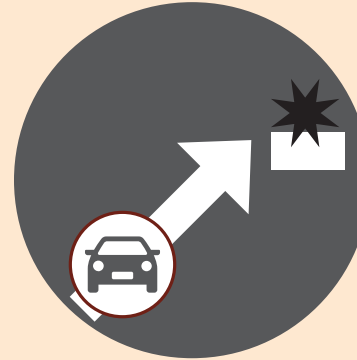
**28%**

broadside (T-bone,  
right-angle, etc.)



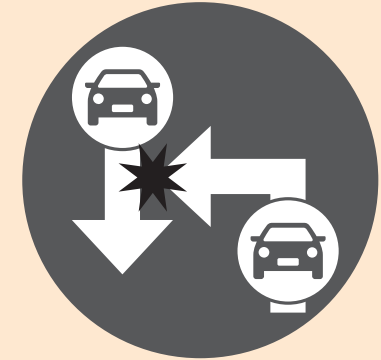
**26%**

ran red light



**25%**

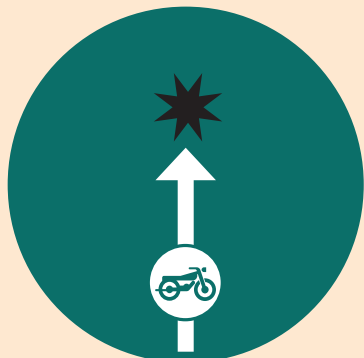
fixed object/ran off  
of road



**11%**

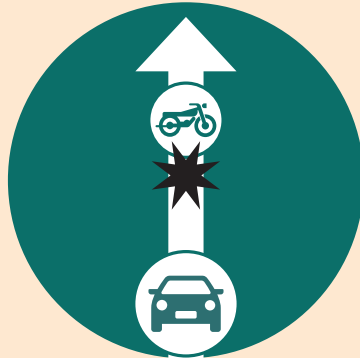
left turn

## MOTORCYCLE (NON-PEDESTRIAN/BICYCLE) TOTAL 23



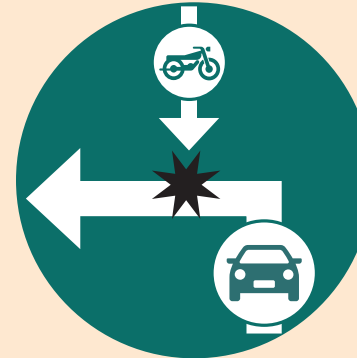
**22%**

single motorcycle



**17%**

rear end



**13%**

car driver turning left,  
motorcycle straight

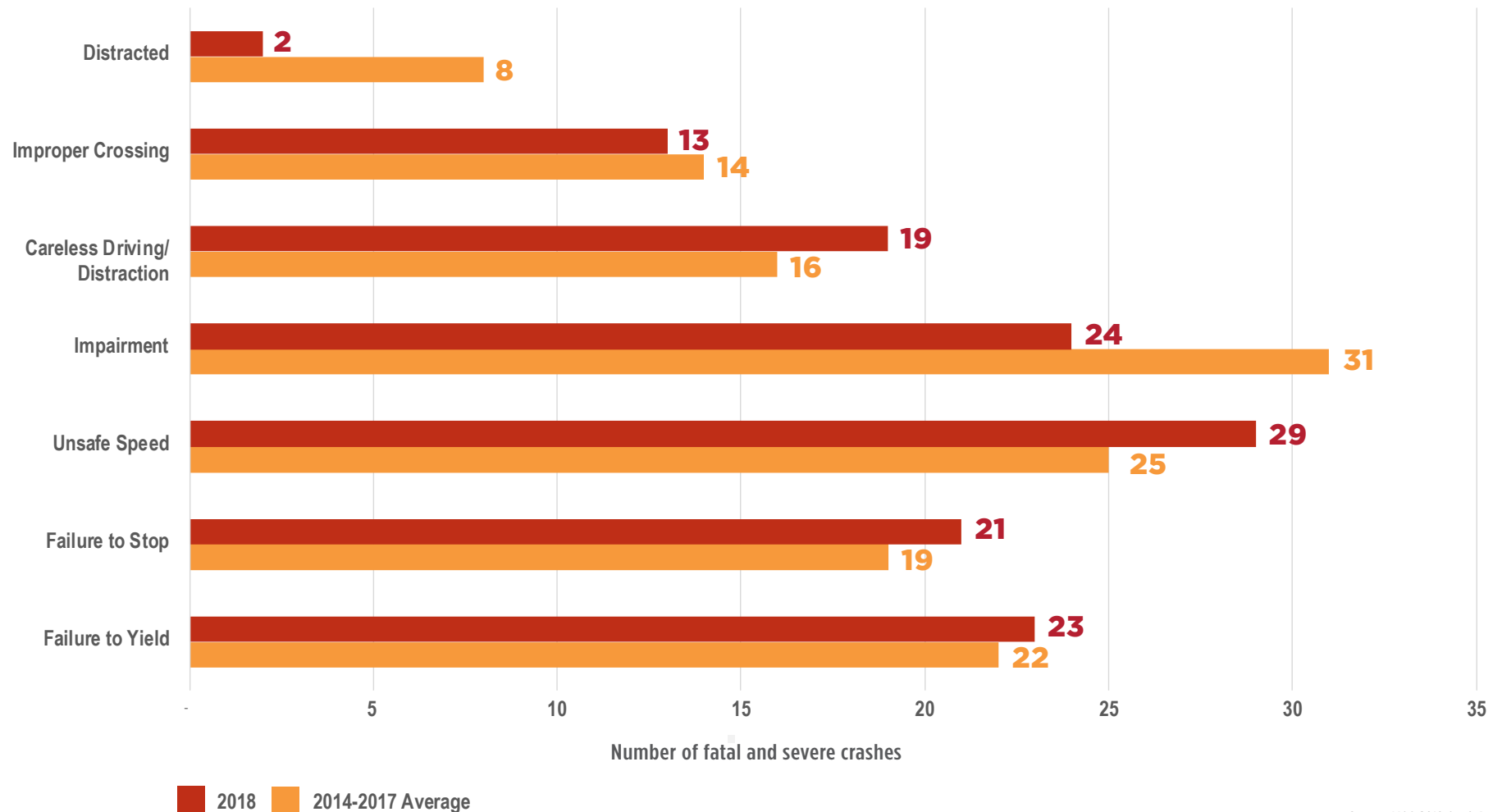


**9%**

car driver impaired

Source: MOA 2018 Crash Data

# Our decisions contributed to 2018 fatal & severe crashes



Source: MOA 2018 Crash Data

Municipality of Anchorage



# INTERCEPT SURVEY RESULTS

## Engaging with People who Walk

In September 2019, we met with people walking along the high injury network to ask them about their experiences as a pedestrian. The survey staff talked to 153 people near transit stops in Midtown, Downtown, Mountain View, and East Anchorage. The goal of the survey was to:

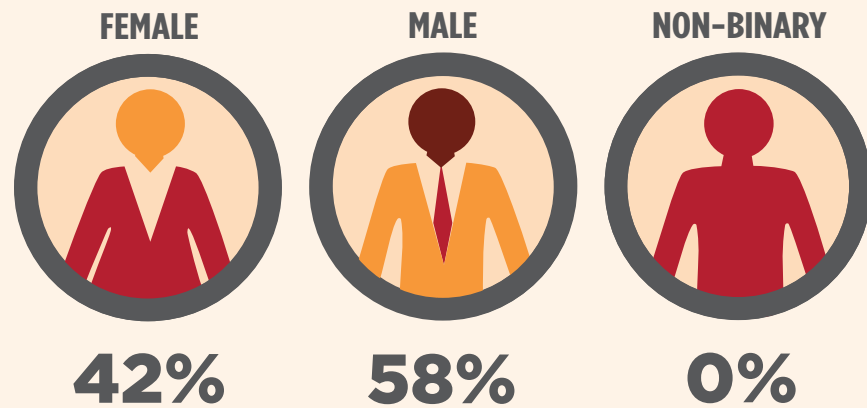
- Engage directly with people who walk and who are traditionally underserved such as people of color, low-income households, people with disabilities, people with limited English proficiency, people experiencing homelessness, and households with limited vehicle access.
- Learn from the community observations to guide more equitable Vision Zero strategies and evaluation measures.



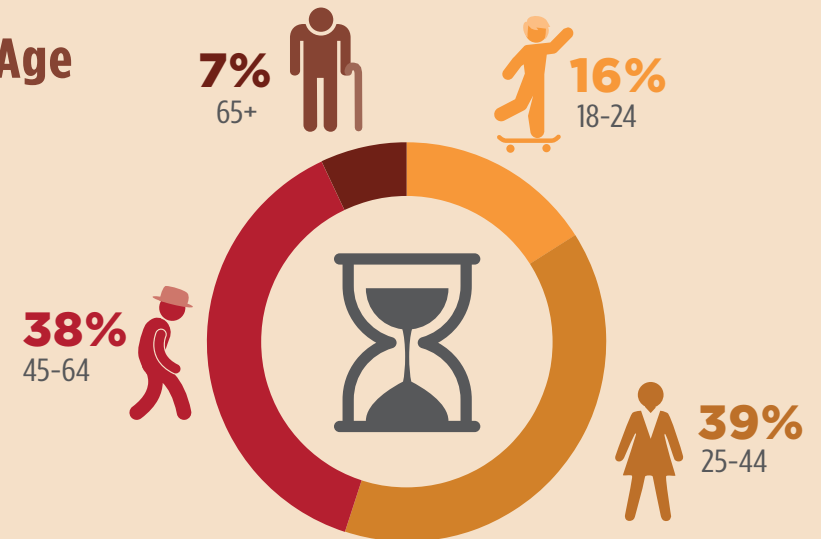
Source: Kittelson & Associates, Inc.

# Who did we talk to?

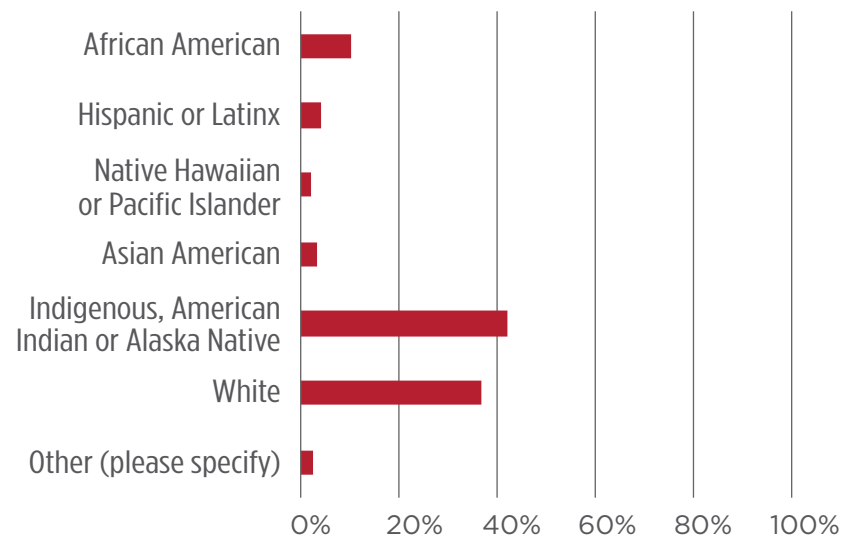
## Gender



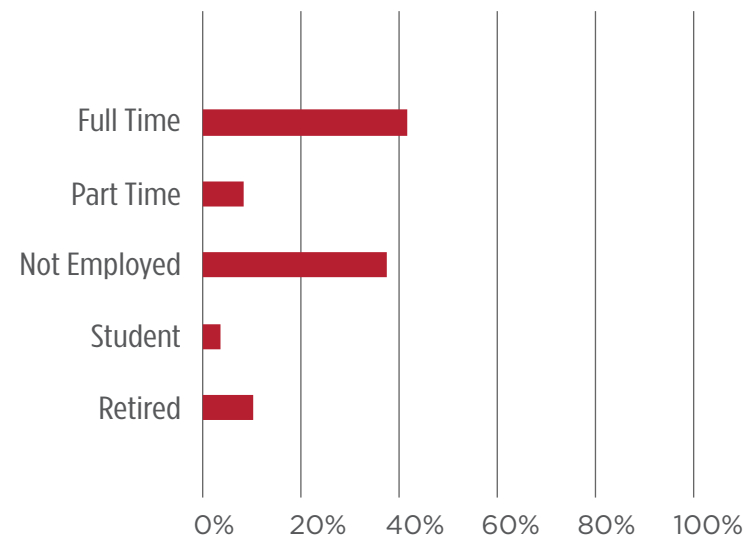
## Age



## Racial Background



## Employment

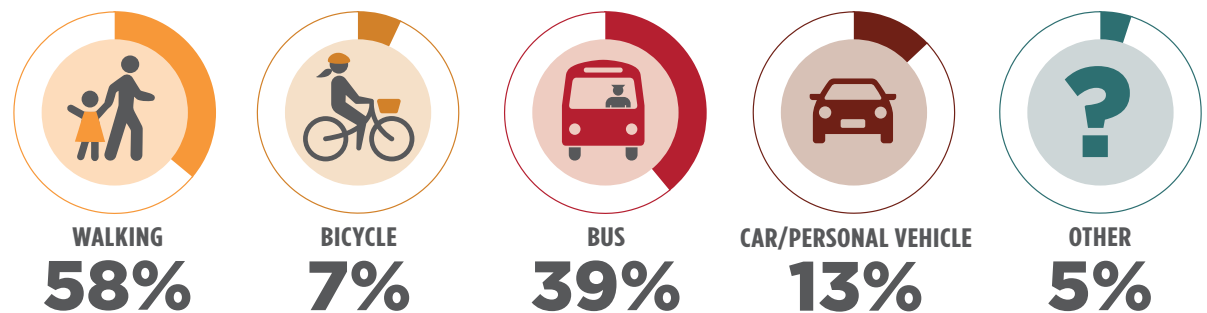


# What did they tell us?

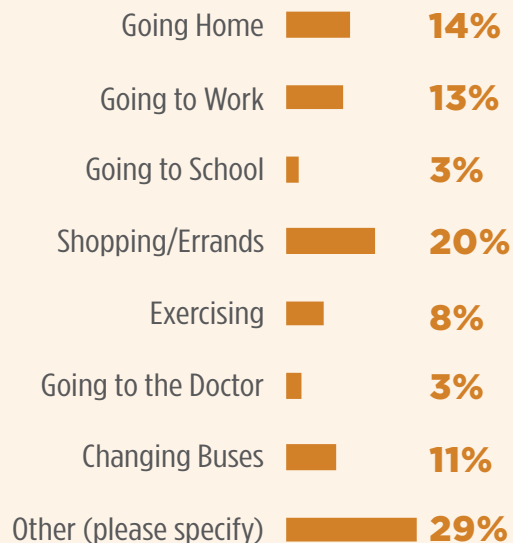
- Nearly four of out five people walk daily (78%)
- 87% stated that they walk year-round.
- 17% stated they had been hit by a car in a crosswalk or intersection. An additional 14% stated they had near misses.
- More than 2/3 of the people felt safe on their trip that day. If they did not, it was most frequently because of vehicle traffic or other people along the route. Of the sixteen people who felt unsafe because of other people, seven were female and nine were male.
- Nearly half of (48%) do not always cross the street using marked crosswalks because it is faster or more convenient to cross elsewhere.

**NOTE:** Percentage totals for survey results do not add up to 100% because respondents were allowed to choose more than one response.

## How do you usually get around Anchorage?



## Why are you walking?

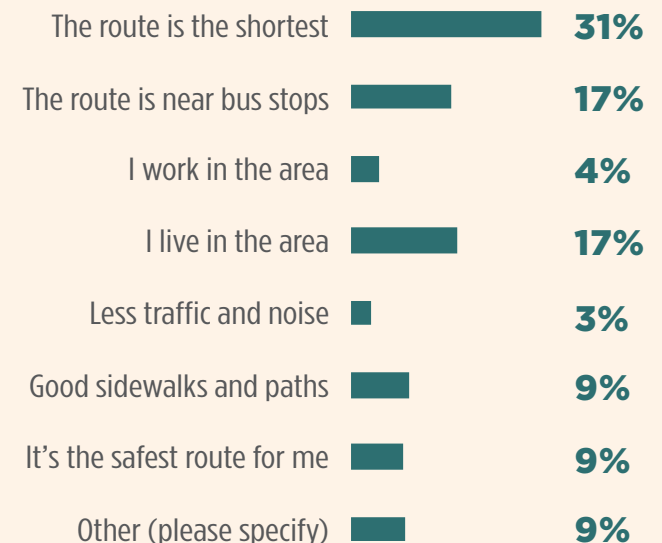


**Cars need to honor the crosswalks.**

**Walk when you can.**

**There are some bad streets that I am afraid to cross.**

## How did you choose your route?





# YOU DECIDE: WHAT CAN YOU DO?

The emotional toll of a death or severe injury is devastating to families, friends, co-workers, emergency responders, and witnesses to the crash. There are also significant expenses associated with medical care, funeral arrangements or disability payments, emergency and police services, courts, lost wages, lost productivity (everybody who was not in the crash but still delayed), property damage, road repairs, insurance premiums, etc.

We also know that physical inactivity and sedentary lifestyles are creating one of the

most serious public health challenges of our time. Physical activity has a variety of specific benefits, including reducing the risk of our most common and preventable diseases: cancer, diabetes, obesity, heart disease and stroke.

The actions of leaders and engineers are vitally important, but when it comes down to it, the most important person is you: the roadway user. We all have a responsibility to make the right choices. Our lives depend on it.

Source: National Safety Council

Collisions are expensive. On average, just one fatality costs public agencies...



**\$1.614 MILLION**

Factor in insurance increases, court costs, road repairs, disability payments, etc., and it rises to...



**\$4.36 MILLION**

## Advocate for plans and policies that promote activity-friendly routes that connect to everyday destinations and save lives.

An activity-friendly route has direct and convenient connections with daily destinations. It provides people walking and biking with physical protection from vehicles and makes it easy for them to cross streets.

Roads with few crossings and higher traffic speeds and volumes are all associated with lower levels of active travel. We need to

design our roadways and community to make it safer and easier to walk and bike for people of all ages and abilities – from 8 years old to 80 years old. People are more likely to walk or bicycle if it is a pleasant experience. Even just one roadway injury or death can make us all feel unsafe on our roadways.

Sources: 2017 AK BRFSS  
2017-2018 AK SWSSS  
American Association of Retired Persons  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

**An active community is a healthy community. Safe streets promote activity.**



**63%**

of adults in  
Anchorage  
are above a  
healthy weight.

**36%**

of students  
are above a  
healthy weight.



**Getting enough physical activity could prevent 1 in 10 premature deaths.**



**1 in 15**  
HEART DISEASE



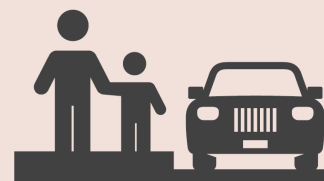
**1 in 8**  
COLORECTAL CANCER



**1 in 12**  
DIABETES



**1 in 8**  
BREAST CANCER



PEOPLE WHO LIVE IN NEIGHBORHOODS WITH  
SIDEWALKS ON MOST STREETS ARE

**47%**

MORE LIKELY TO BE ACTIVE AT LEAST  
39 MINUTES A DAY.

## Walk and bike more

Walking and biking to our everyday destinations is a simple way to increase physical activity and improve health. [Step It Up! The Surgeon General's call to Action to promote walking and walkable communities (2015)]. People are more likely to walk and bike when they see others doing the same!

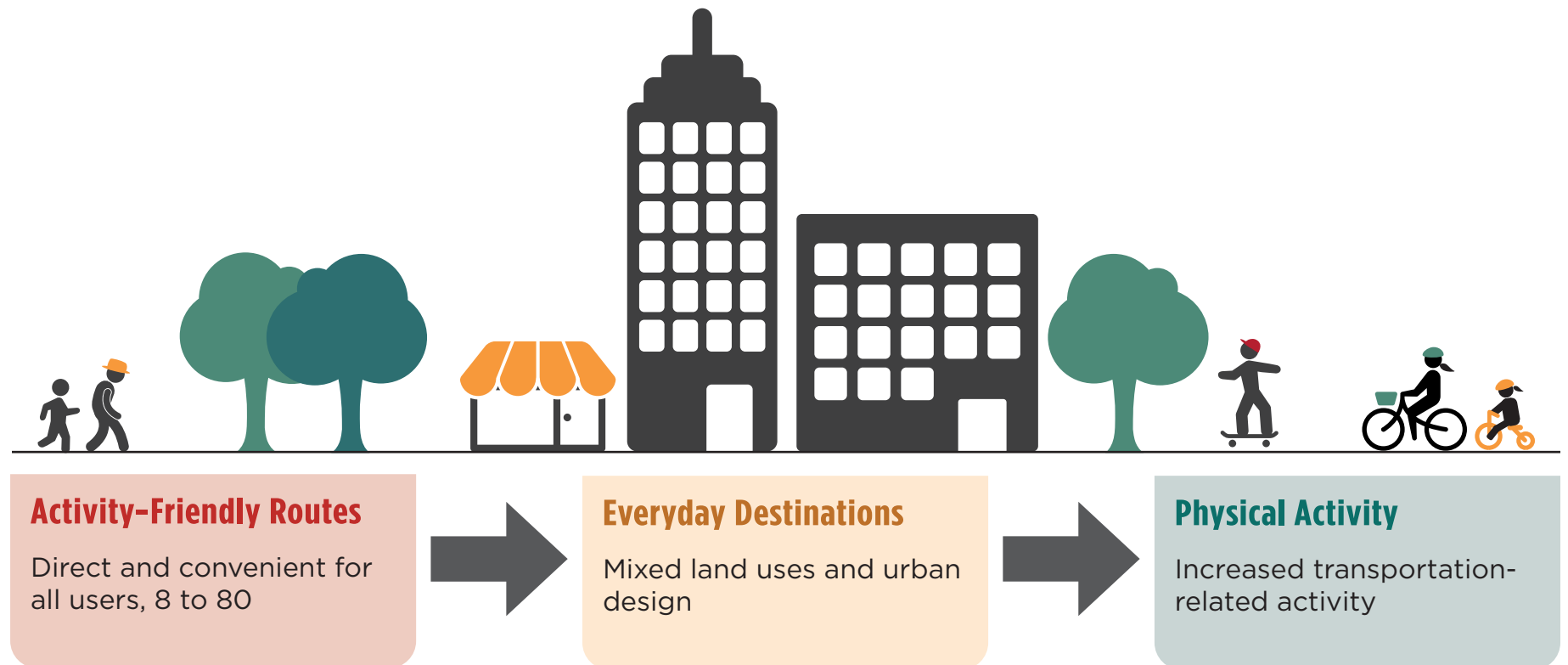
## Share the road

No matter if you are walking, biking, or driving, obey the rules of the road. Be proactive, alert, focused, attentive, and patient.

Be on the lookout for the most vulnerable road users—pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorcyclists—people who are not protected by the steel cage of a car, SUV, or truck. Children, older adults, and people with disabilities can have greater difficulty reacting quickly to hazards.

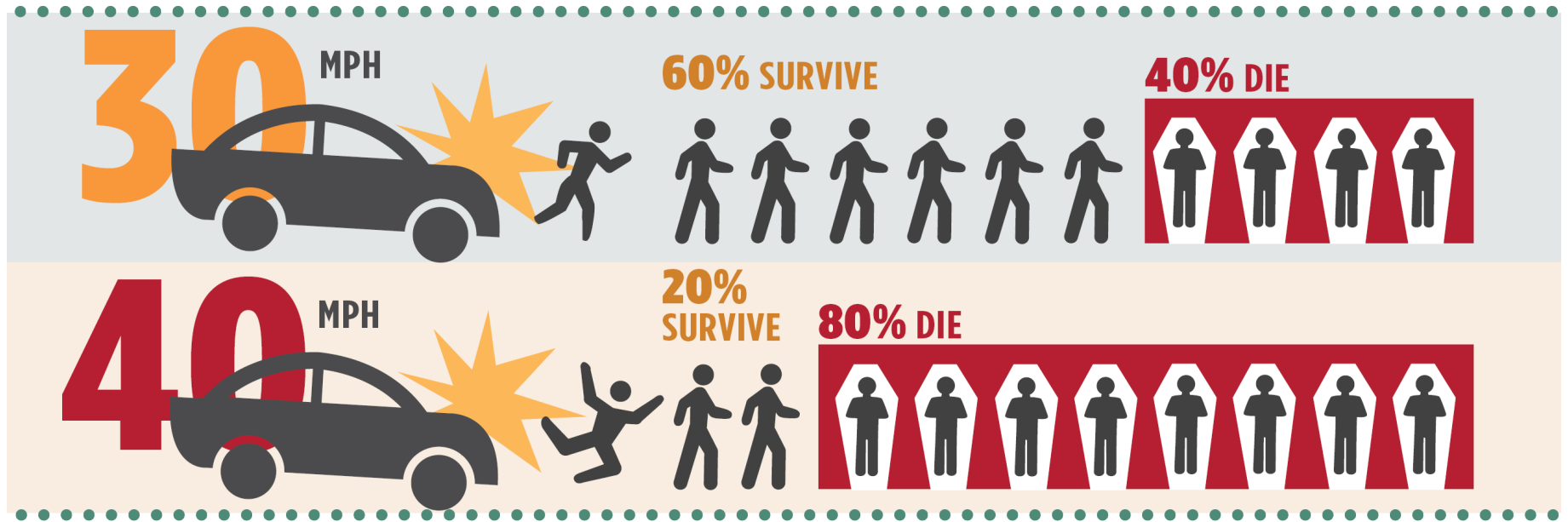
## Slow down and stop for red lights

Deaths from motorists running red lights hit a 10-year high in the United States in 2017 (AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety). More than half the people killed in these crashes were not the red-light running drivers or their passengers, but the people they hit. High speeds make crashes more likely and more deadly.





# Slowing down saves lives.



Source: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)



# Pay attention to the road!

According to the American Automobile Association (AAA)...



**31%**

of drivers are distracted by their dog in the car.



**80%** drive frequently with pets, but only **17%** use a seat-belt or pet carrier.

A crash is **8x** more likely while reaching for something.



**3x** more likely while eating or drinking.

Distracted driving causes more than

**58%**

of teen driver crashes.



**50%**

report seeing drivers on their phones while driving.



Source: American Automobile Association

## Don't drive distracted.

In the US, crashes reported to involve a distracted driver kill an average of nine people and injure more than 1,000 every day. Because distractions are ephemeral, it can be hard to accurately assess how often they cause or worsen crashes. Anecdotally, drivers seem more distracted than ever, but in Anchorage, only 61 of 35,529 crash records reported cell phone use. There is so

much loss, but so little data about key driver factors in fatal and serious crashes.

A survey of our youth shows:

- 45.4% of Anchorage high school students reported that they have talked on a cell phone while driving (2017 AK YRBS).
- 36.2% of Anchorage high school students reported that they texted or emailed while driving (2017 AK YRBS).

Imagine driving the entire length of a football field with your eyes closed. That is what happens when you take your eyes off the road for five seconds to send or read a text.

## Drugs, alcohol, and roads don't mix: talk to our youth.

In 2018, 21% of fatalities in Anchorage were drug or alcohol related. Drugs or alcohol were involved in 22% of Anchorage's severe injury crashes that year.

Young people frequently overestimate their ability to function when intoxicated. A recent survey revealed that 32% of teens do not think driving while high on marijuana is dangerous, and 33% think driving while high is legal. (Liberty Mutual Insurance and Students Against Destructive Decisions, 2017)

- 16.1% of Anchorage high school students report that in the past month they rode with a driver who had been drinking (2017 AK YRBS).
- 11.5% of Anchorage high school students report that in the past month they drove while using marijuana (2017 AK YRBS).

“One of the things we’ve seen in the first quarter of 2019 is an increase in fatality traffic collisions where drugs and alcohol are a factor.”

—Capt. Sean Case, Anchorage Police Department, source: KTUU.com



“A woman died Friday night when she was hit by a pickup truck whose driver had a blood alcohol level nearly twice the legal limit, the Anchorage Police Department said.”

—Alaska Daily News, March 25, 2019

# WHAT'S NEXT?



## VISION ZERO ANCHORAGE

Vision Zero  
launch

Data-driven  
action plan

Phase I  
Implementation  
Plan

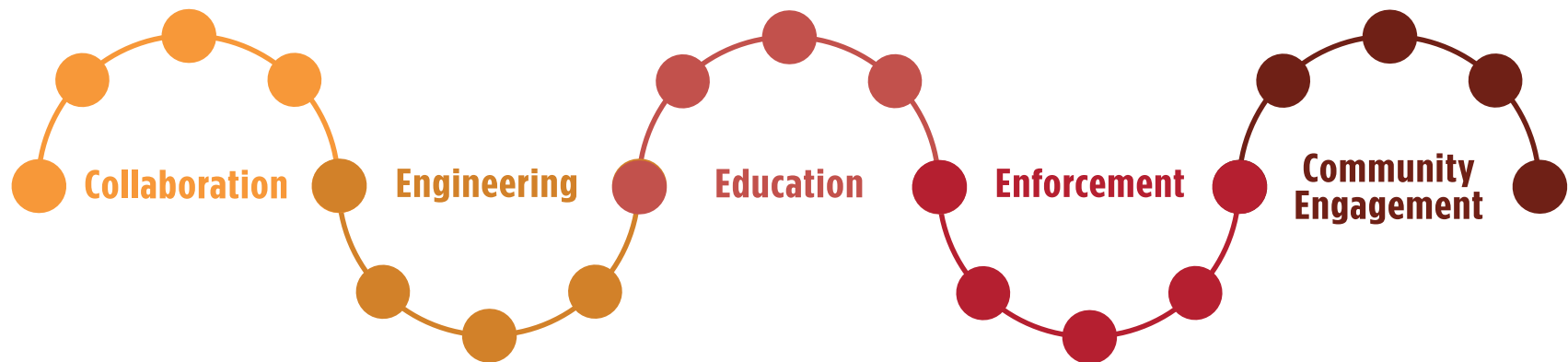


2016

2018

2019

# There is no one solution.


















There is always more work to be done. Making community-level changes requires partnerships with public health, planners, parks and recreation, public works, traffic engineers, tribal representatives, social services agencies, non-profits, and community members.










All elements of the Vision Zero Action Plan will continue moving forward in 2020, with a primary focus on education and community engagement.









# Year 1 progress report

Progress	Processes and Collaboration	Performance Metric	Notes
  	Designate Municipality of Anchorage Lead Agency	Lead agency designated	
  	Identify Vision Zero coordinator	Staff position	
  	Create a multi-agency Vision Zero Task Force that meets regularly to review traffic crash data, equity, transportation system performance, funding, and action plan progress	Quarterly meetings held	Two meetings each were held with the Core Working Group and Steering Committee.
  	Regularly update policy makers, MOA departments, and partnering agencies	Six updates per year	Presentations were given to Planning & Zoning Commission, Urban Design Commission, Federation of Community Councils, Public Transit Advisory Board, Downtown Partnership, Senior Advisory Board, Parks and Recreation Commission.
  	Secure a sustainable funding source for the Vision Zero program	Dedicated funding source secured	








## Build Safer Streets for Everyone

Progress	Processes and Collaboration	Performance Metric	Notes
  	When developing the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and AMATS Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), prioritize transportation improvement projects that:		
  	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are on a Vision Zero high injury network</li> </ul>		
  	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have a documented vulnerable user safety concern identified by data, or Provide a comparable alternative route to the high injury network for vulnerable users</li> </ul>	Number of segments improved compared to prior years	AMATS has added project ranking criteria to score projects that address the Vision Zero High Injury Network.

## Create Safer Speeds

Progress	Processes and Collaboration	Performance Metric	Notes
  	Strategically target vehicular red light running, speeding, and impaired and distracted driving through Anchorage Police Department (APD) presence/ enforcement complemented by a focused education campaign along the high injury network	One targeted corridor per month	APD received grant money for targeted enforcement
  	Begin process to amend MOA charter, code, and judiciary process to allow Automated Traffic Enforcement Cameras and conduct pilot studies on their effectiveness	Automated enforcement allowed for pilot project	

## Promote a Culture of Safety

Progress	Processes and Collaboration	Performance Metric	Notes
	Launch Vision Zero public safety campaign	Campaign launched	
	Hold one Vision Zero demonstration project—ideally to coincide with another crowd-drawing community event	One project	
	Create a Vision Zero concerns map	Map created	
	Improve data collection, analysis and accessibility		Updated MOA Traffic Report, Intercept Survey for Pedestrians
	Develop and implement a plan for more consistent and efficient data gathering, analysis, and reporting	Plan implemented	
	Work with APD to improve data collection on speed, impairment, and distraction (behavior) for all crashes	Improved data	
	Continue to monitor and report number of people killed and severely injured on Anchorage roadways by all modes quarterly using the MOA Open Data Portal	Quarterly reports	

**KEY:**  Not yet started  In Progress  Timely Progress and On Track



**VISION ZERO**  
ANCHORAGE