

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

A Safer Future for the Boston Region

June 2025

Every day, countless journeys begin and end across the Boston Region. Yet, these everyday movements carry a hidden danger: traffic crashes that lead to serious injuries and fatalities. The Boston Region Vision Zero Action Plan is our roadmap to change this reality, aiming for an ambitious, yet achievable goal: **ZERO TRAFFIC FATALITIES AND SERIOUS INJURIES BY 2050**. This commitment is about proactively designing a transportation system that protects everyone, recognizing that human mistakes happen, and that we need to build in layers of safety to prevent the most tragic outcomes.



The Problem We Face:

Roadway Safety Challenges

The numbers tell a stark story: from 2018 through 2022, about 1,000 people each year in the Boston Region were killed or seriously injured in traffic crashes. While severe crashes represent a smaller portion of all traffic incidents, they carry an enormous human and economic cost, amounting to billions of dollars annually. Our analysis shows that these severe crashes are not entirely random. They are concentrated in specific areas and involve particular circumstances:

- **WHERE CRASHES HAPPEN:** A large proportion of fatal and serious injury crashes occur on arterial roads where faster vehicle speeds often mix dangerously with people walking, biking, and rolling. Most crashes also happen on roads owned and managed by municipalities, highlighting the crucial role local action plays.
- **HOW CRASHES HAPPEN:** Nearly 40 percent of fatal and serious injury crashes involve a single vehicle, with 35 percent of those crashes involving a pedestrian. Crashes at night are also disproportionately more likely to result in fatalities or serious injuries, and are often linked to impaired driving and speeding.
- **KEY EMPHASIS AREAS:** Our detailed analysis identified specific areas of concern where crashes are most prevalent or rapidly increasing in the Boston region. These include crashes at intersections, those involving vulnerable road users (pedestrians, bicyclists, and those using mobility devices), lane departures, crashes involving older drivers/older roadway users, incidents related to speeding, and those involving large vehicles. These are the areas where our collective efforts can have the biggest impact.

To pinpoint these problem areas, we've developed two powerful tools: the **High-Injury Network (HIN)** and the **High-Risk Network (HRN)**. The HIN identifies "hotspots" where severe crashes have historically occurred, helping us understand past patterns. The HRN proactively identifies locations with features that indicate a high risk of future crashes, even if they have not had a severe incident yet. These networks, accessible through an online interactive map (see bostonmpo.org/visionzero), empower communities to understand their local safety challenges and focus their efforts where they are most needed.

A Collective Voice:

Our Engagement Approach and Key Findings

Developing a plan of this magnitude requires listening to those most affected. Our engagement strategy was designed to gather diverse perspectives from across the Boston Region. Through a Vision Zero Task Force, public surveys, focus groups, municipal roundtables, and a dedicated project website; we heard from hundreds of residents, municipal staff, law enforcement, public health professionals, advocates, and community leaders.

The feedback was clear and consistent:

- **TRUST ON THE ROAD:** A significant concern is a lack of trust among road users. Pedestrians worry about drivers stopping, drivers worry about impaired or distracted driving, and bicyclists fear being given insufficient space.
- **ROADWAY DESIGN MATTERS:** People identified that current roadway designs often enable drivers to drive at high speeds. People feel unsafe. When vulnerable road users are uncomfortable walking, rolling, or biking, they are more likely to choose vehicle travel. Key infrastructure concerns included missing or poor sidewalks, crosswalks, and bike lanes, as well as poor visibility at intersections.
- **POLICY AND FUNDING GAPS:** While many proactive safety policies exist, stakeholders highlighted the need for legislative changes, such as permitting automated enforcement for red light running and speeding. Critically, a pervasive challenge identified by municipal staff is the *lack of sufficient and flexible funding* to implement comprehensive safety improvements.



A Path Forward:

Working Together for Vision Zero

Achieving our Vision Zero goal by 2050 demands a collaborative and sustained effort from everyone involved in transportation safety. The Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) will play a leading role in this implementation, and we invite all municipalities, state partners, community-based organizations, and members of the public to join us.

The MPO's role includes:

- **COORDINATE:** Foster collaboration through peer exchanges, working groups, and direct communication to ensure everyone is moving in the same direction.
- **PLAN:** Integrate Safe System principles into future planning efforts and support safety-focused initiatives like Safe Routes to School and Complete Streets.
- **FUND:** Prioritize safety investments in areas identified by our HIN and HRN and those aligned with the Safe System Approach.
- **EDUCATE:** Increase public awareness through targeted campaigns addressing critical issues like speeding, lane departures, and vulnerable road user safety.
- **EVALUATE:** Track and report regional safety progress annually, using performance metrics to strengthen successful strategies and adapt as needed.
- **ADVOCATE:** Champion policies and legislation at all government levels that enhance roadway safety, including authorizing the use of automated enforcement.

The role of municipalities and state partners include:

- **IMPLEMENTING PROVEN SAFETY COUNTERMEASURES:** Using MPO data and guidance, prioritize street design changes (like traffic calming and improved crosswalks) and implement best practices to address our identified crash emphasis areas (Intersections, Lane Departure, Vulnerable Road Users, Older Drivers, Speeding, and Large Vehicles).
- **ADOPTING KEY POLICIES:** Establish lower speed limits in high-density areas and school zones. Adopt "safe fleet" policies that mandate safety technology and driver training for municipal vehicle fleets.
- **LEVERAGING FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES:** Actively pursue available funding programs, including MassDOT's Safe Routes to School, Complete Streets, and Shared Streets and Spaces programs, as well as federal grants.
- **CONTINUED ENGAGEMENT AND COLLABORATION:** Establish local Vision Zero task forces, engage with the public, and coordinate with neighboring communities and state agencies to ensure a unified approach to safety.

This Action Plan is more than a document: it is a commitment to a future where no one loses their life or suffers a serious injury on our roads. It is a call to action for every community, every road owner, and every resident to work together to build a truly safe transportation system for the Boston Region. **Let's make Vision Zero a reality.**