City Council Report

City Council Meeting: September 8, 2026
Agenda Item: 11.B

To: Mayor and City Council

From: Christopher Dishlip, Director of Public Works, Mobility Division

Subject: Vision Zero Study Session: Transition to a Safe System Approach and Direction on Future Roadway Safety Priorities

Recommended Action

Staff recommends that the City Council:

1. Adopt a finding that this study session is not a "project" subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA);
2. Conduct a study session regarding the City's Vision Zero program, the transition to a modified Safe System approach, and the next phase of roadway-safety implementation; and
3. Provide direction regarding the following items:
   a. Adoption of the modified seven-element Safe System framework as the organizing structure for the next phase of the City's Vision Zero program;
   b. Development and evaluation of a complementary High-Risk Network through the Local Roadway Safety Plan to enable proactive identification of, and response to, emerging locations that present vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian safety issues ;
   c. Implementation of the Neighborhood Traffic Calming Toolkit, including the hybrid intake model, the proposed 51 percent / 25 percent neighborhood-support framework, and continued delivery of the early implementation projects identified in this report ;
   d. The proposed approval framework for traffic diversion treatments, including the administrative pathway for qualifying diverters, clarification of the 2014 Michigan Avenue Neighborhood Greenway Council-approval requirement, and a multifamily temporary-installation pathway ; and
   e. Administrative implementation approaches under which Council establishes policy and program parameters and staff advances qualifying safety and mobility improvements under administrative approval processes, including a Residential Preferential Parking modernization framework .

Summary

In February 2016, the City adopted a Vision Zero commitment through the Pedestrian Action Plan, establishing a goal of eliminating fatal and severe-injury collisions by 2026. During the past decade, the City has advanced that commitment through engineering, encouragement, education, enforcement, and evaluation. Work has included complete-street and corridor projects, intersection improvements, signal and signing changes, speed-management projects, pedestrian and bicycle improvements, Safe Routes to School programming, transportation demand management, targeted enforcement, and ongoing review of crash trends.

The City has not achieved the aspirational goal of reducing fatal and severe-injury crashes to zero by 2026. Total fatal and severe-injury (FSI) crashes declined from 62 in 2024 to 52 in 2025, but pedestrian-involved FSI crashes increased in every year of the 2021–2025 period, during which time pedestrians and bicyclists accounted for 20 of the City's 21 traffic fatalities.

Moving forward, the underlying premise of Vision Zero remains unchanged: deaths and life-altering injuries are not an acceptable consequence of mobility. The City Council has directed staff give greater priority to roadway safety and to advance implementable safety improvements more quickly. With the Mobility Division now integrated into Public Works, staff is shifting toward a modified Safe System approach while establishing clearer policies, standardized tools, and administrative processes that can move qualifying safety and mobility improvements from identification to implementation more efficiently.

The integration of the Mobility Division into Public Works was completed in early 2026 as part of the City's Realignment Plan, blending civil engineering, capital project delivery, and quick-build construction capability with the City's mobility planning and operations functions. Over the past six months, that structure has delivered an initial series of near-term safety projects, and preliminary 2026 collision data and strengthened traffic-safety enforcement coordination with the Police Department have provided early, encouraging signals, as Q2-2026 data indicates improved safety

outcomes. These indicators cover a limited period and will be further validated through the Local Roadway Safety Plan (LRSP).

Given these factors, staff is proposing that the City transition from the traditional five-E framework to a modified Safe System approach. A Safe System approach has been incorporated into roadway-safety practice by federal and state transportation agencies, including FHWA[1] and Caltrans, as well as local agencies and professional organizations. It recognizes that people make mistakes, that the human body has limited tolerance for crash forces, that responsibility for safety is shared, and that multiple proactive and redundant layers of protection are needed. Santa Monica's proposed framework would use seven interdependent elements: Safe Speeds, Safe Roads, Safe Road Users, Safe Vehicles, Post-Crash Care and Learning, Safe Land Use, and Safe and Viable Transit.

This study session is intended to establish direction for the next phase of Vision Zero implementation. Council has already directed staff to prioritize human life over vehicle throughput in design and engineering decisions involving the public right-of-way. Questions about how that direction should be applied when roadway safety affects emergency response, transit, goods movement, parking, loading, business access, neighborhood circulation, or other public purposes will be developed through the LRSP and updated Vision Zero Action Plan and returned to Council with more specific technical analysis and implementation choices.

The report describes the proposed Safe System framework, recent crash trends, proactive risk identification through the LRSP, and near-term implementation work already underway. It also describes the processes being developed to support faster project delivery, including:

- The Neighborhood Traffic Calming Toolkit

[1] During the writing of this staff report the Federal Highway Administration published an updated National Roadway Safety Strategy that identified three core objectives – Safer People, Safer Roads, Safer Vehicles. Safe Speeds and Post-Crash appear to have been removed from the FHWA Safe Systems approach.

- A clearer traffic-diversion approval framework
- Implementation of an Automated Traffic Enforcement System (red-light camera) program
- Smart Curb Management
- Updates to Personal Delivery Device regulations
- Modernization of the Residential Preferential Parking Program

The report also recognizes that some Safe System tools are controlled or limited by State and Federal law and summarizes several recent and pending legislative authorities relevant to Santa Monica.

Council direction from this study session will inform the LRSP, final Neighborhood Traffic Calming Toolkit, near-term greenway and traffic-calming implementation, related program and regulatory actions, and development of an updated Vision Zero Action Plan. The LRSP will provide the detailed technical analysis and risk-based prioritization; the subsequent Vision Zero Action Plan will translate those findings and Council policy direction into specific actions, responsibilities, project priorities, timelines, funding strategies, and performance measures. Broader project-level tradeoffs will return to Council with that more concrete technical and implementation context.

Background

Vision Zero Commitment

The City's Vision Zero commitment was adopted on February 23, 2016, as an element of the Pedestrian Action Plan. The commitment was founded on the premise that fatal and severe-injury collisions are unacceptable and established a guiding goal of reducing

fatal and severe-injury crashes to zero by 2026. The Pedestrian Action Plan placed traffic safety within a broader effort to improve health, wellbeing, accessibility, and equitable mobility for people of all ages and abilities.

Vision Zero originated in Europe in the 1990s and was later adopted by a growing number of United States cities. Although local programs vary, the central principle is consistent: transportation systems should be designed and operated so that human mistakes do not result in death or life-altering injury.

Related Plans, Policies, and Council Direction

Santa Monica's Vision Zero work has been advanced through multiple plans, policy documents, corridor studies, and Council actions. These include the Pedestrian Action Plan, Bicycle Action Plan, Bicycle Action Plan Amendment, Vision Zero Action Plan and High Priority Intersections work, Michigan Avenue Neighborhood Greenway Concept Plan, Local Roadway Safety Plan, Climate Action and Adaptation Plan, and safety studies for Wilshire Boulevard and Santa Monica Boulevard. Together, these efforts identified priority networks and locations, established design and programmatic strategies, and supported implementation through capital projects and operational changes.

On February 10, 2026, Council directed staff to return with a study session on the City's Vision Zero work, with the goal of prioritizing human life over vehicle throughput in design and engineering decisions involving the public right-of-way. Staff has also heard clear interest from Council and the community in faster implementation of lower-cost, quicker-build safety projects. Since that direction, staff has advanced speed-management projects, stop-sign evaluations, speed-feedback signs, automated red-light enforcement, neighborhood traffic-calming tools, Smart Curb Management, and project-delivery process improvements. More detailed project-level tradeoffs will be developed through the LRSP and updated Vision Zero Action Plan, when Council can consider them alongside updated technical analysis, project priorities, and implementation options.

Vision Zero Work Since 2016: The E's

For much of the past decade, the City's Vision Zero program has been organized around the complementary areas of: Education, Encouragement, Engineering, Enforcement, and Evaluation. The framework supported public information and education, programs that support non-drive alone trips, physical roadway improvements, and targeted enforcement, and data review.

Education

The Mobility Division has administered transportation-safety education and outreach programs including Safe Routes to School, Safe Routes for Seniors, the Take the Friendly Road campaign, school-based programming, family bicycle rides, bike rodeos, and project-specific walks and rides. These programs increase awareness and reinforce safe travel practices, while recognizing that education is one layer of a broader safety strategy.

Encouragement

Encouragement programs have looked beyond the physical street network to the services, incentives, and amenities that make it practical for people to walk, bicycle, use transit, share rides, or avoid vehicle trips. Examples include employer and developer transportation demand management programs, employer shuttles, transportation allowances, unbundled parking, parking cash-out, secure bicycle parking, showers, transit promotions, Bike Month activities, Rides with the Mayor, and participation in Week Without Driving. The City's transportation demand management regulations seek to reduce vehicle trips by requiring or encouraging customized transportation-benefit programs for employees and residents.

Engineering

Engineering work has included capital improvement projects, speed surveys, stop-sign evaluations, signal timing changes, leading pedestrian intervals, pedestrian recall, turn restrictions, bus-stop placement and relocation, signing and striping changes, curb-ramp improvements, traffic calming, crosswalk improvements, bicycle facilities, intersection redesign, and changes to lane configuration. Project selection and design

have been informed by planning and engineering judgment, community feedback, crash history, corridor studies, the Local Roadway Safety Plan, network-completion goals, accessibility needs, access to schools, jobs, parks, housing, transit, and major destinations, and City direction.

Enforcement

The Police Department has conducted enforcement tied to primary collision factors and has participated in capital-project planning and multidisciplinary safety discussions. The City has also pursued tools that can provide more consistent and data-based enforcement, including Automated Bus Lane Enforcement and Automated Bike Lane Enforcement. A separate companion item on the September 8, 2026 agenda requests introduction of an ordinance establishing the legal framework for an Automated Traffic Enforcement System Program for red-light violations.

Evaluation

Staff reviews crash trends and project performance and uses that information, together with adopted plans, community input, roadway context, and other available data, to inform engineering, education, and enforcement efforts. Severe crashes are relatively rare events at any single location, which reinforces the value of supplementing crash history with proactive analysis of roadway and operating characteristics. Larger and heavier vehicles, distracted and impaired driving, dependence on private automobiles, and incomplete recovery of transit ridership have also made the roadway-safety challenge more complex.

Recent Fatal and Severe-Injury Crash Trends

	All Modes			*Bike-Involved Crashes*			*Pedestrian-Involved Crashes*		
Year	*Total FSI*	*Fatal*	*Severe Injury*	*Total FSI*	*Fatal*	*Severe Injury*	*Total FSI*	*Fatal*	*Severe Injury*
2021	29	2	27	5	0	5	9	2	7
2022	33	6	27	5	1	4	10	5	5
2023	38	5	33	6	1	5	15	3	12
2024	62	5	57	10	2	8	21	3	18

2025	52	3	49	5	0	5	22	3	19
Total	**214**	**21**	**193**	**31**	**4**	**27**	**77**	**16**	**61**

In the five years from 2021 through 2025, Santa Monica saw a total of 214 Fatal or Severe Injury (FSI) crashes, with 31 of these crashes involving bicyclists and 77 involving pedestrians. Within this total, 20 of the 21 fatal crashes involved a bicyclist (4) or a pedestrian (16).

In reviewing the Public Safety Department crash records, of the 31 bike-involved FSI crashes, the bicyclist was deemed to be at fault in 11, a motorist was deemed to be at fault in 16, and fault was not assigned in 4. The most common Primary Collision Factors for driver-at-fault bike crashes were Improper Turning (5) and Driving Under Influence (3). The most common Primary Collision Factor for bike-at-fault crashes was Unsafe Speed (3).

Of the 77 pedestrian-involved crashes, the pedestrian was deemed to be at fault in 21, a motorist was deemed to be at fault in 48, and fault was not assigned in 8. For driver-at-fault pedestrian crashes, Ped R/W Violation (23), Other Hazardous Movement (8), and Unsafe Speed (7) were the most common Primary Collision Factors. For pedestrian-at-fault crashes, Pedestrian Violation (15) was by far the most frequent collision factor.

The FSI crashes from 2021 through 2025 were widely dispersed throughout the City, with no single intersection seeing more than 3 FSI crashes (there were 6 such intersections, along with another 29 intersections with 2 FSI crashes). Looking at corridor crash counts, no single corridor saw more than 12% of the total FSI crashes; 26 FSI crashes occurred along Ocean Ave and Santa Monica Blvd each, while 22 crashes occurred along Pico Blvd. This dispersion indicates that the City's remaining safety challenge cannot be resolved through a small number of hot-spot projects, and instead requires a systematic approach across the entire network.

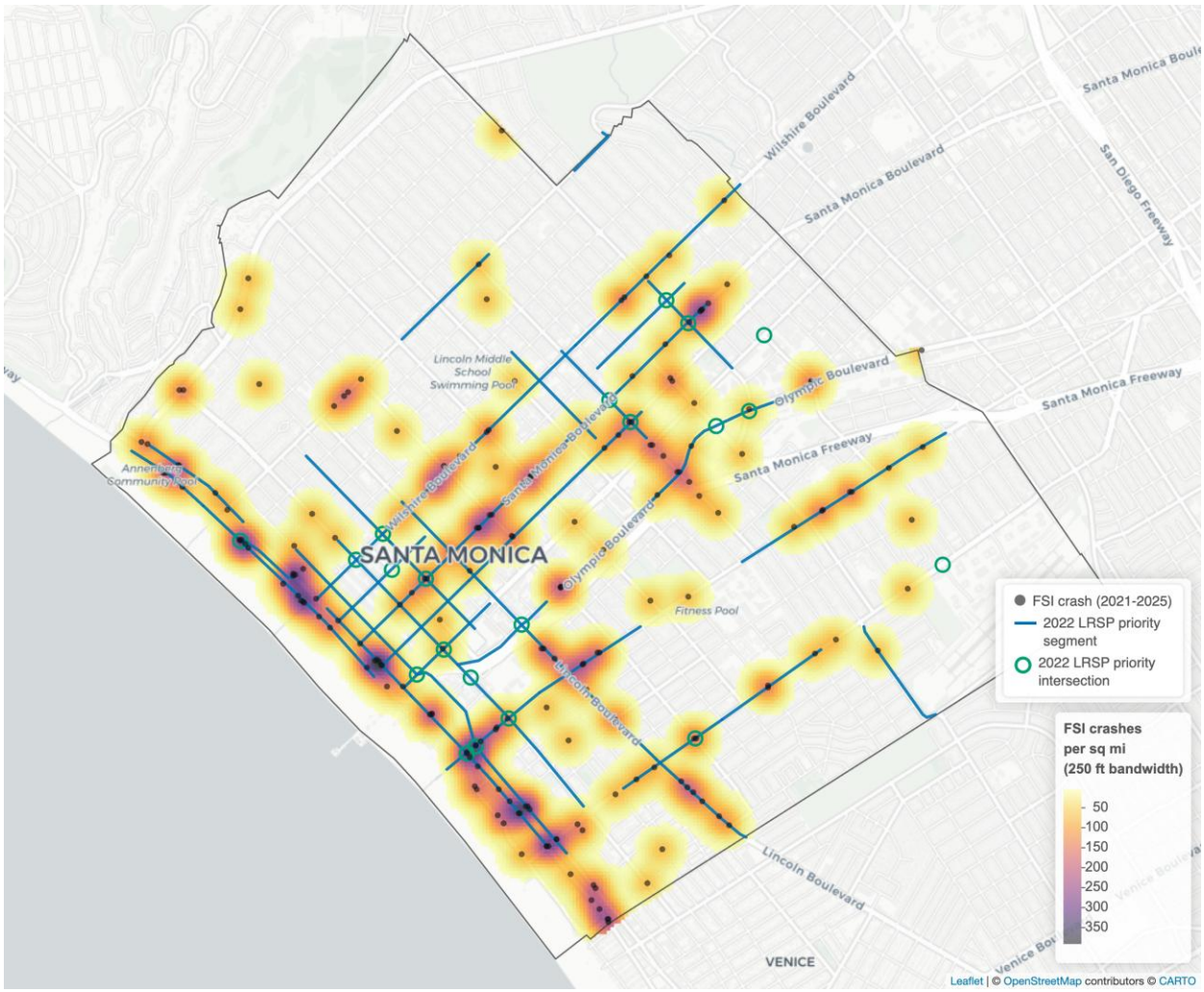

Figure 1. Density Map of 2021–2025 Fatal and Severe-Injury Crashes and 2022 LRSP Priority Locations

The City did not achieve the adopted goal of eliminating fatal and severe-injury crashes by 2026. While total FSI crashes declined from 62 in 2024 to 52 in 2025, pedestrian-involved FSI crashes increased in each year of the period, rising from 9 in 2021 to 22 in 2025. Failure to meet the target does not mean the work completed was without value, or that any individual treatment was ineffective. It does demonstrate, however, that continued progress – particularly for people walking and biking – requires clearer performance measures, faster implementation where warranted, and a more systematic method for identifying and addressing risk, while recognizing that the City cannot control every factor contributing to a crash.

Preliminary data from 2026 has provided some early, encouraging signals under the City's new delivery structure. Data from Q2-2026 indicates improved safety outcomes, however, these indicators reflect a limited reporting period and should not be interpreted as anything more than temporal data, all of which will be validated through the five-year analysis conducted as part of the LRSP.

In addition, the data also serves as one indication that the organizational and project delivery changes described below are beginning to produce tangible results. Further, improved coordination between the Mobility Division and the Police Department has also strengthened the enforcement layer of the City's safety program, with enforcement activity increasingly aligned to primary collision factors and high-injury corridors.

Discussion

As part of the City's Realignment Plan, the Mobility Division was reorganized into the Public Works Department in early 2026. The reorganization was designed to blend civil engineering, capital project delivery, and quick-build construction capability with the City's mobility planning and operations functions, so that the time period between identifying a safety concern and implementing a field treatment is as short as possible.

The relocation of the Mobility Division within Public Works has integrated transportation planning, design, construction, operations, and maintenance more closely. Staff has established on-call design agreements, and Council recently awarded an on-call construction agreement to expand capacity for quick-build delivery. The organizational change also creates an opportunity to standardize how lower-cost safety concerns are screened, designed, approved, constructed, monitored, and adjusted. The intent is for Council to establish policy and program parameters, while staff develops transparent technical and engagement processes that allow qualifying projects to move forward administratively without repeatedly returning to Council for the same policy decision.

Over the past six months, staff has begun applying this more implementation-focused approach through a series of near-term roadway-safety actions. Work has included:

- Design and construction of speed humps on Berkeley Street;
- Design of speed tables on Neilson Way;
- Deployment of speed-feedback signs on Yale Street and Marine Street; and
- Evaluation of approximately 30 intersections for potential stop-sign installation.

Staffing capacity remains an implementation consideration: quick-build delivery, proactive analysis, maintenance of temporary materials, project evaluation, and performance reporting all require staff time and funding. The LRSP and updated Vision Zero Action Plan will identify the scale of work, priority actions, and resource implications for future Council consideration.

1. Transition to a Modified Safe System Approach

The transportation planning and engineering profession has increasingly shifted from approaches centered primarily on changing individual behavior and conventional roadway operating measures toward a Safe System approach that considers human injury tolerance, roadway context, vulnerable users, operating speeds, vehicle characteristics, and proactive risk reduction. This reflects an evolution in professional practice rather than a rejection of engineering, education, enforcement, or operations. Applicable industry standards are evolving and are a necessary consideration when implementing policy direction. As the transportation sector evolves, the central question becomes how the transportation system and underlying land uses can reduce the likelihood that errors and unsafe behavior result in fatal or severe injury.

In practical terms, the proposed framework considers three related dimensions of risk: exposure, likelihood, and severity. Exposure reflects how many people encounter potentially harmful interactions and how often or how far they travel. Likelihood reflects the probability that an interaction becomes a crash and can be influenced by roadway

geometry, visibility, operating conditions, and conflict points. Severity reflects the energy transferred when a crash occurs and is strongly affected by vehicle speed, vehicle mass, crash angle, and physical separation. These dimensions are interdependent, and the appropriate combination of strategies will vary by context. The objective is to reduce exposure to high-energy risk, reduce the likelihood of harmful crashes, and reduce the severity of crashes that do occur.

The transition does not eliminate education, encouragement, enforcement, or evaluation. Those tools remain important, but they are used within a broader framework that does not assume perfect behavior and does not rely on compliance as the only layer of protection. Likewise, no single Safe System element can achieve Vision Zero independently. Land use affects trip length and mode choice; transit access affects whether longer trips can be made without a private automobile; roadway design affects speed and conflict; vehicle design affects mass, visibility, and crash avoidance; and post-crash care provides a final layer of protection when prevention fails.

Safe System Principles

The Federal Highway Administration identifies six principles that form the basis of the Safe System approach. The following principles and descriptions are reproduced from FHWA's *The Safe System Approach* (FHWA-SA-20-015):

Humans Make Mistakes.

People will inevitably make mistakes that can lead to crashes, but the transportation system can be designed and operated to accommodate human mistakes and injury tolerances and avoid death and serious injuries.

Humans Are Vulnerable.

People have limits for tolerating crash forces before death and serious injury occurs; therefore, it is critical to design and operate a transportation system that is human-centric and accommodates human vulnerabilities.

Responsibility is Shared.

All stakeholders (transportation system users and managers, vehicle manufacturers, etc.) must ensure that crashes don't lead to fatal or serious injuries. Safety is Proactive. Proactive tools should be used to identify and mitigate latent risks in the transportation system, rather than waiting for crashes to occur and reacting afterwards. Redundancy is Crucial. Reducing risks requires that all parts of the transportation system are strengthened, so that if one part fails, the other parts still protect people. Death/Serious Injury is Unacceptable. While no crashes are desirable, the Safe System approach prioritizes crashes that result in death and serious injuries, since no one should experience either when using the transportation system.

Santa Monica's Modified Safe System Framework

A widely used Safe System framework has been organized around five elements: Safe Speeds, Safe Roads, Safe Road Users, Safe Vehicles, and Post-Crash Care. Staff proposes to retain those elements while adding Safe Land Use and Safe and Viable Transit because land use and transportation choices influence trip length, mode choice, access to daily needs, and exposure to higher-energy motor-vehicle travel. The proposed seven-element framework is a local adaptation intended to make these upstream influences explicit; the elements are interdependent and the City's ability to influence them varies substantially.

- **Safe Road Users.** Design, education, communication, enforcement, and accessibility practices that account for people of different ages, abilities, experiences, gender identities, incomes, and travel modes.

- **Safe Vehicles**. Policies and programs that consider crash-prevention technology, vehicle size and mass, direct visibility, fleet characteristics, emerging mobility technology, and other vehicle-related factors. Many of the most important vehicle-safety standards are established at the state or federal level, limiting direct local authority.

- **Safe Speeds.** Projects and operations would be designed to lower vehicle speeds and reduce crash forces, including vertical deflection, narrowed travel lanes, target-speed and speed-limit review, signal timing, turn management, and self-enforcing street design.

- **Safe Roads.** Street designs and operational practices that would manage speeds and conflicts, improve visibility, create predictable space for different users, and provide multiple layers of protection. Safe-road design should consider the energy and context of interactions, not simply the number of conflict points in isolation.

- **Post-Crash Care and Learning**. Rapid emergency response, crash investigation, accurate data collection, victim support, and processes that allow the City to learn from fatal and severe-injury crashes while appropriately protecting active investigations, claims, and legally privileged information.

- **Safe Land Use.** Land use patterns that reduce trip length, place everyday needs closer together, support connected street networks and increase the likelihood that trips can be made by lower-energy modes. Land use decisions also influence where pedestrian, bicycle, transit, loading, and vehicle activity are concentrated and therefore where exposure occurs. Compact, multimodal land use can also reduce household dependence on private automobiles and the associated costs of vehicle ownership, while recognizing that these benefits are only meaningful when non-automobile options are safe, accessible, and practical.

- **Safe and Viable Transit.** Transit service that is frequent, reliable, competitive in travel time, accessible, and connected to safe first- and last-mile routes. Santa Monica is a regional employment destination, and many employees who work in the City travel distances that are beyond a practical walking or bicycling trip. For many of these trips, transit is the most plausible alternative to private automobile travel, but its ability to reduce vehicle exposure depends on regional service quality and safe connections in the communities from which riders begin and end their trips.

Figure 2. Santa Monica Modified Safe System Framework

The City's ability to influence Safe System outcomes varies by element: some decisions, such as local street design, curb management, traffic calming, and project prioritization, are substantially within City control, while others, including vehicle regulation, portions of regional transit service, state law, and some design and funding requirements, depend on external partners.

The City’s workforce composition highlights the importance of external partners. According to the 2024 5-year American Community Survey, there are 92,869 people age 16+ who work in Santa Monica, with 19,315 of those being Santa Monicans who work from home. Of the remaining 73,554, only 9,013 (12.2%) live within Santa Monica, while 64,541 (87.8%) commute in from elsewhere. This means that much of the City’s travelling workforce lives outside of practical walk- and bike-sheds making regional transit and safe first/last-mile connections especially important to reducing vehicle exposure.

Organizational and Delivery Changes

The relocation of the Mobility Division within Public Works has integrated transportation planning, design, construction, operations, and maintenance more closely. Staff has established on-call design agreements, and Council recently awarded an on-call construction agreement to expand capacity for quick-build delivery. The organizational change also creates an opportunity to standardize how lower-cost safety concerns are screened, designed, approved, constructed, monitored, and adjusted. The intent is for Council to establish policy and program parameters, while staff develops transparent technical and engagement processes that allow qualifying projects to move forward administratively without repeatedly returning to Council for the same policy decision.

Staffing capacity remains an implementation consideration. Quick-build delivery, proactive analysis, maintenance of temporary materials, project evaluation, and performance reporting all require staff time and funding. The LRSP and updated Vision Zero Action Plan will help identify the scale of work, priority actions, and resource implications for future Council consideration.

Near-Term Implementation Since Council Direction

Over the past six months, staff has begun applying this more implementation-focused approach through a series of near-term roadway-safety actions. Work includes design and construction of speed humps on Berkeley Street; design of speed tables on Neilson Way; deployment of speed-feedback signs on Yale Street and Marine Street; and evaluation of approximately 30 intersections for potential stop-sign installation. Staff has also continued signal, signing, pedestrian, and operational safety work where improvements can be advanced within existing authority and available resources.

These are the types of focused neighborhood safety requests that the proposed Neighborhood Traffic Calming Toolkit is intended to process more consistently in the future, so that routine qualifying treatments can move more quickly while more consequential treatments receive the additional analysis and review appropriate to their network effects. The projects below represent the first wave of implementation delivered through the quick-build capacity established under the Realignment.

#	Project	Description	Status
1	**Chelsea Ave / Santa Monica Blvd left-turn improvement**	Quick-build treatment to manage left-turn conflicts and improve pedestrian crossing safety at the intersection.	Deployed
2	**Berkeley Street speed humps**	Vertical deflection to reduce operating speeds through physical street design.	Under construction
3	**Neilson Way speed tables**	Vertical deflection sized for a higher-volume roadway context, with monitoring of transit and emergency operations.	In design
4	**Speed feedback signs – Yale St & Marine St**	Driver feedback signage to reinforce target speeds on residential corridors.	Deployed
5	**Stop-sign evaluations (approx. 30 intersections citywide)**	Evaluation of approximately 30 intersections for potential stop-sign installation against adopted criteria to reduce conflict severity.	Under evaluation
6	**No-right-turn-on-red signage**	Turn restrictions at selected intersections to reduce vehicle-pedestrian conflicts during crossing phases.	Deployed at various locations
7	**Pedestrian recall installations**	Signal operations changes so pedestrian phases are served automatically without push-button actuation.	Deployed at various locations
8	**2nd & 4th Street curb transition**	Conversion of existing 15-minute parking spaces to designated loading and passenger drop-off zones as an interim step while Smart Curb Management procurement and enabling authority are completed.	In process of deployment
9	**Neighborhood diverter pilot program**	Resident-initiated and program-based diversion treatments under the approval framework described in this report.	Framework outlined in this report

The draft Neighborhood Traffic Calming Toolkit speed-hump cut sheet illustrates how future requests can be evaluated against consistent selection and site criteria. Monitoring remains important to understand operating speeds, user behavior, emergency response and municipal operations, maintenance needs, and unintended effects.

2. Proactive Risk Identification and the Local Roadway Safety Plan

The City is initiating a Local Roadway Safety Plan that will analyze approximately five years of crash data, update the City’s High Injury Network and priority locations,

evaluate crash types and contributing factors, and recommend countermeasures and project priorities. The LRSP is the appropriate process for developing the detailed technical methodology that will guide future safety investment.

Consistent with the proactive principles of the Safe System approach, staff proposes that the LRSP develop and evaluate a complementary High-Risk Network in addition to the traditional High Injury Network. A High Injury Network identifies streets and intersections where fatal and severe-injury crashes have already occurred. A High-Risk Network would use data such as roadway design, operating speeds, exposure, land use, vehicle characteristics, and other safety-related contextual factors to identify locations with characteristics associated with elevated future crash risk even where a severe-crash pattern has not yet developed. The methodology, variables, weighting, terminology, documentation, and use of the network would be vetted through the LRSP technical process, with additional legal review as appropriate before the network is finalized or used for formal prioritization.

The purpose of the High-Risk Network is to supplement, not replace, crash-history analysis. Severe crashes are relatively rare at any individual location, and a proactive framework can help identify locations that share characteristics associated with severe outcomes before a crash pattern is established. Equity and social vulnerability may also inform how the City prioritizes among identified needs, but the LRSP should distinguish those policy considerations from crash-risk variables unless the technical analysis demonstrates a direct relationship.

The LRSP should also consider community-reported transportation safety concerns as supplemental information. Santa Monica’s 311 system and other community input can identify conditions that are not fully captured in collision or roadway datasets and can help validate or refine technical analysis. Because reporting rates vary across neighborhoods and populations, request volume should not by itself determine safety priority.

3. Near-Term Safe System Implementation

As Council considers the transition to a Safe System approach, this section presents the policy, regulatory, and program work now underway through the realigned mobility operation. Several items are advancing as companion or parallel formal actions on the September 8 agenda, and the remainder are presented for Council direction or awareness, with formal actions returning to Council as required.

Automated Traffic Enforcement System (Red-Light Camera)

As a separate item on the September 8, 2026 agenda, Council will consider introduction of an enabling ordinance for an Automated Traffic Enforcement System (ATES) program compliant with Senate Bill 720 and California Vehicle Code Section 21455.9. The companion item is intended to establish the legal framework; this Vision Zero report provides additional implementation context. Staff has established a multidisciplinary project team, initiated analysis for an initial deployment at two signalized intersections, evaluated procurement pathways, and begun development of the required operational and administrative framework. Staff is currently advancing vendor procurement and site analysis and will return with the required location findings, ATES Impact Report, contract award and other program actions before citations begin. The enabling ordinance is intended to support a citywide program over time, with locations selected, added, removed, or relocated based on documented safety criteria, collision history, operational considerations, available funding, and state-law requirements.

Smart Curb Management

Curb space is increasingly a dynamic transportation resource rather than a static location for private-vehicle storage. Pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, commercial freight and delivery vehicles, passenger pick-up and drop-off, personal delivery devices, transportation network companies (TNCs), autonomous vehicles, people with disabilities, and private motorists all rely on access to limited curb space.

Smart Curb Management uses data, designated operating zones, pricing or time restrictions, technology, and ongoing monitoring to allocate curb space more predictably. Strategically located loading and passenger zones can reduce double parking and unpredictable maneuvers, preserve operating space for transit and bicycle

facilities, and improve intersection visibility. The City is developing a pilot on 2nd and 4th Streets.

Existing authority under Senate Bill 532 allows Santa Monica to establish automated mobile-device parking payment zones and test new approaches to curb pricing. However, that authority does not extend to automated citation-based curb enforcement. While a technology system may be capable of identifying when a vehicle enters a regulated curb space, determining the length of stay, and verifying payment, California cities may not use stationary cameras or sensors to automatically initiate and mail a parking citation based on that information.

This limitation creates an implementation gap between curb-management technology and parking enforcement. Short-duration violations may begin and end before a parking enforcement officer can respond. At the same time, officers must also be able to determine in the field whether a vehicle has a valid digital session or has otherwise complies with applicable curb regulations. As a result, implementing the technology under the existing legal framework would require close integration of payment technology, officer-based enforcement, administrative procedures, and applicable state parking laws.

Pending Senate Bill 1292 would address a significant portion of this gap by expressly authorizing Santa Monica to use stationary cameras and sensors for specified curb-management and parking-enforcement purposes. The legislation would also establish a process for authorized personnel to review detected violations and mail citations. Together, the provisions would create a clearer statutory framework connecting automated curb management and enforcement, while still requiring the City to establish appropriate local policies and operating procedures.

Staff will continue developing the pilot within existing authority while tracking the legislation and returning to Council for any required enabling ordinance, contract award, or other formal action.

Speed Management and Stop Control

Staff is advancing speed-management treatments, including speed humps on Berkeley Street and speed tables on Neilson Way, and has deployed speed-feedback signs on Yale Street and Marine Street. Over 30 intersections are being evaluated for potential stop-sign installation. These projects provide near-term examples of a Safe System approach that reduces vehicle speeds or addresses neighborhood safety concerns through physical design and operational changes rather than relying only on posted speed limits or enforcement. The draft Neighborhood Traffic Calming Toolkit speed-hump cut sheet illustrates how future requests can be evaluated against consistent selection and site criteria. Monitoring remains important to understand operating speeds, user behavior, emergency response and municipal operations, maintenance needs, and unintended effects.

Neighborhood Greenways

Neighborhood greenways are continuous routes on low-speed, low-volume local streets that prioritize people walking, bicycling, and rolling while maintaining local vehicle access. They use traffic calming, traffic diversion, enhanced crossings, wayfinding, and related treatments to provide comfortable connections between neighborhoods, schools, parks, commercial areas, transit, and the broader bicycle and pedestrian network.

The 2011 Bicycle Action Plan established a broader citywide network of neighborhood greenways and other low-stress bicycle routes. Its 5-Year Implementation Plan identified the Michigan Avenue Neighborhood Greenway, Michigan Wiggle Neighborhood Greenway, and Ashland Avenue Neighborhood Greenway for near-term implementation. The longer-term 20-Year Vision identified additional neighborhood greenway projects, including Washington Avenue and 24th Street, as well as extensions and connections to the Michigan and Ashland greenways. Some additional bikeway corridors also incorporated neighborhood-greenway treatments or branding as part of broader bikeway projects.

- *Michigan Avenue*

- In February 2014, Council unanimously approved the Michigan Avenue Neighborhood Greenway Concept Plan, known as MANGo, and directed staff to pursue phased implementation through grants, community benefits, and capital projects. Council requested a long-term goal of 1,500 or fewer daily automobile trips on the greenway and required Council approval before installation of a traffic diverter. Multiple phases have since been implemented, and additional work is advancing toward the Bergamot Arts District and E Line station.

- *Washington Avenue*
  - The City has also secured funding through the Southern California Association of Governments Sustainable Communities Program for additional neighborhood greenway work, including a quick-build greenway along Washington Avenue and further implementation on the Michigan Avenue corridor. The current project is intended to test traffic-calming elements and evaluate their effects before permanent changes are made.

The original Bicycle Action Plan also recognized an issue that remains central to today's traffic-calming discussion: measures used to reduce cut-through traffic on one street should be evaluated so that the problem is not simply shifted to an adjacent street, and complementary measures may be appropriate where diversion occurs. That network perspective is particularly important when considering equity, because residents on a street receiving traffic calming may have greater capacity to organize and request improvements than residents on a nearby street that receives diverted traffic. It is also relevant to emergency response. Santa Monica's connected street grid can provide multiple response routes and redundancy, but diverters and other circulation changes should be evaluated at the network level to understand whether they reduce, preserve, or constrain alternate emergency access routes rather than judging a treatment solely by its effect on one street segment.

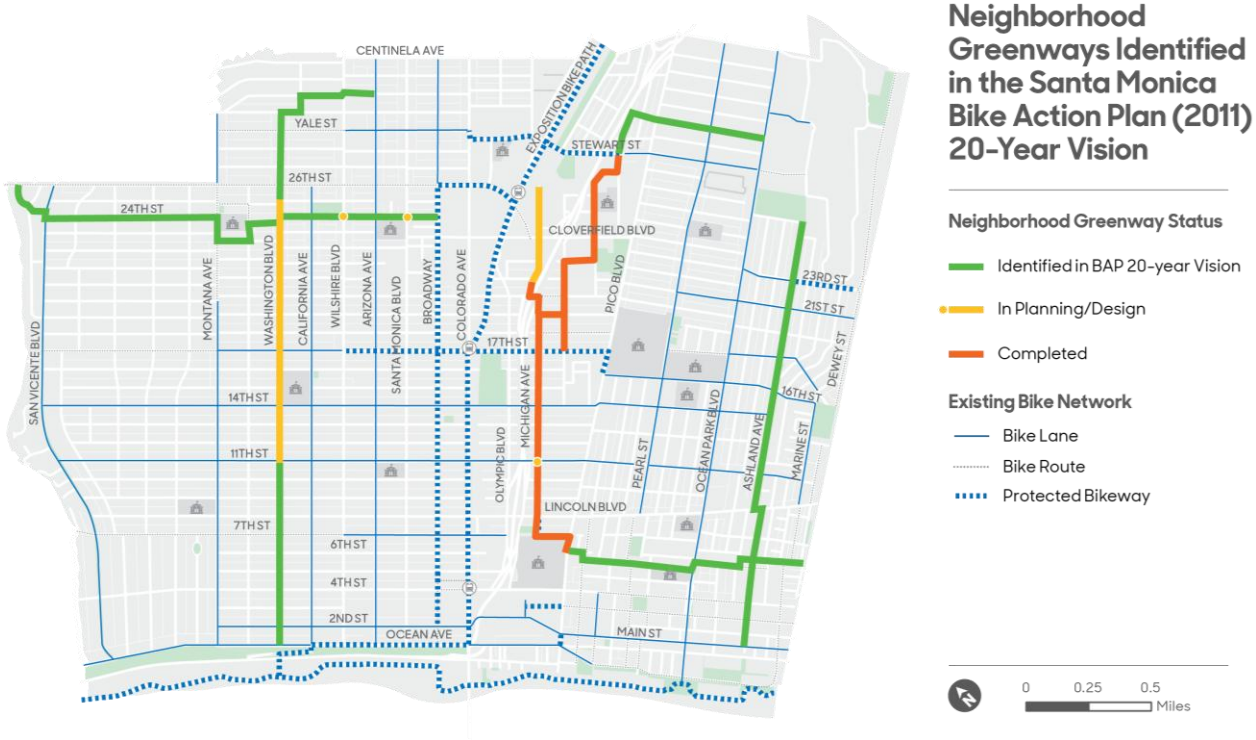

Figure 3. Neighborhood Greenway Network: Existing, Funded, and Planned Improvements

4. Neighborhood Traffic Calming and Diversion Implementation

Neighborhood Traffic Calming Toolkit

The City has been working with Toole Design to develop a Neighborhood Traffic Calming Toolkit that will establish a consistent intake, analysis, engagement, design, approval, implementation, and monitoring process for quick-build neighborhood safety treatments. Potential tools include signs and markings, daylighting, modular curb extensions, Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons, speed humps and cushions, neighborhood traffic circles, chicanes, turn restrictions, diverters, and other treatments intended to reduce speeding, discourage cut-through traffic, improve visibility, and support neighborhood greenways. Draft cut sheets for speed humps and traffic diverters are included as examples.

Staff proposes a hybrid intake model. Residents would identify the transportation problem or concern rather than select the treatment, and staff would validate the concern using available data and determine the appropriate response based on

adopted engineering and policy criteria. This approach preserves community knowledge while allowing limited resources to be prioritized consistently based on conditions such as speeds, crash and risk information, vulnerable users, traffic volumes, network effects, equity, emergency access, and implementation feasibility.

Equity and network effects remain important considerations. A purely request-driven process may favor neighborhoods with greater familiarity with City processes or greater capacity to organize. Traffic calming can also alter travel patterns and shift vehicle trips to adjacent streets. Evaluation should therefore consider the affected network, including potential diversion, emergency-response routing, transit, sanitation and other essential services, rather than treating each request as an isolated street segment.

The proposed framework would distinguish among routine traffic-calming measures, diversion treatments that are already contemplated by an approved plan, and diversion proposals that represent a new circulation change. For previously approved programs or locations meeting adopted standards, staff proposes an administrative pathway after neighborhood support and technical review. For locations that are not previously approved or do not meet adopted standards, the same neighborhood-support process would initiate technical analysis, but a supported proposal would return to Council for approval before installation.

The level of engagement should correspond to the magnitude, reversibility, and network effects of the treatment. The Toolkit would define the affected petition area, verification method, technical screening, notice requirements, and monitoring criteria.

Diverter Approval Framework

Recent community discussion about diversion supports a clearer distinction between diversion treatments that have already been contemplated by adopted policy and those that represent a new circulation decision. The proposed framework outlined below distinguishes among routine traffic-calming measures, diversion treatments that are already contemplated by an approved program or adopted standards, and diversion proposals that represent a new or nonstandard circulation change. Of note, the draft

traffic-diverter cut sheet reinforces why this treatment requires a more structured process than many routine traffic-calming measures. Diverters change where vehicles travel rather than simply how fast they travel, so staff must evaluate the surrounding street network, potential traffic redistribution, transit and emergency operations, bicycle connectivity, driveway access, and effects on nearby streets and neighborhoods. Emergency response and roadway crash prevention are both public-safety objectives that should be evaluated together as part of that network analysis.

Accordingly, for diversion, staff proposes developing an approval framework that is built on the City's existing Block Party Street Closure framework as a model for neighborhood-support thresholds, with an approval framework concept outlined below.

- *Qualifying Diverters: Administrative Pathway*
    - Staff proposes that a diverter that is part of a previously approved diverter or greenway program, or a location that meets previously approved diverter standards, be eligible for administrative approval after staff completes engineering analysis, interdepartmental review (including Fire/EMS and Police), public notice and outreach, and a defined monitoring and evaluation process. Monitoring would evaluate volumes, speeds, adjacent-street effects, and emergency access, with adjustment or removal where adopted performance criteria are not met.

- *New or Nonstandard Proposals: Council Approval*
    - For locations that are not part of a previously approved program and do not meet adopted standards, a neighborhood-support process would initiate technical analysis, but a supported proposal would return to Council for a public hearing and approval before installation.
    - It is proposed that the applicable support thresholds follow the Block Party Street Closure model, where 51% of residents and / or businesses would be required where the majority of parcels in the affected area are zoned R-1; and 25% where the majority of parcels are zoned other than R-1.

- *Council Clarification Requested: Michigan Avenue Greenway*
    - Where prior Council direction established a project-specific approval requirement, including the 2014 MANGo requirement for Council approval before installation of a diverter, Council clarification through this study session would be needed before staff relies on the new administrative pathway.
    - Staff requests that Council clarify that qualifying diverters on adopted neighborhood greenways may be implemented administratively under the framework described above, superseding the 2014 project-specific approval requirement.
    - Absent this clarification, the administrative pathway could not be applied to the Michigan Avenue corridor, which is the City's most mature greenway.

Personal Delivery Devices

The City's current Personal Delivery Device (PDD) framework was developed around remotely piloted devices and does not fully accommodate newer autonomous delivery technology now operating in neighboring jurisdictions. Staff is drafting Municipal Code amendments and corresponding updates to the PDD Administrative Regulations so that Council may consider authorizing current-generation remotely controlled, semi-autonomous, and autonomous devices while retaining appropriate safety, accessibility, operating, insurance, data-reporting, emergency-response, enforcement, and fleet-management requirements. Proposed Municipal Code amendments are anticipated to be presented at an upcoming Council meeting with detailed operating standards maintained through administrative regulations and operator requirements so the framework can adapt as technology changes.

The proposed modernization is not intended simply to remove restrictions. Expanded PDD use may reduce some short vehicle delivery trips, double parking, circling, and competition for commercial loading space, but additional devices in the pedestrian environment can create concerns involving sidewalk accessibility, pedestrian comfort, device speed and weight, fleet concentration, obstruction, storage, enforcement, and

interactions with people using wheelchairs or other mobility devices. The updated framework should therefore pair greater technological flexibility with clear operating conditions, monitoring, and enforcement authority.

Residential Preferential Parking

The Residential Preferential Parking Program has evolved over several decades to address localized parking impacts and preserve on-street parking for residential use. The current framework generally relies on Council designation of preferential parking zones and was developed when curb regulations were treated more statically. Complete-street and roadway-safety projects can remove or reallocate parking on commercial corridors and create new parking pressure on nearby residential streets, while some wide residential streets may also have opportunities to increase parking supply through alternative parking configurations.

Staff proposes modernizing the program so Council establishes the policy, eligibility areas, and program standards up front and staff can administratively establish or modify qualifying zones within those parameters. The updated framework could also expressly allow portions of preferential parking areas to be converted to metered, time-limited, loading, or other less-restrictive curb uses where appropriate to help manage parking impacts associated with safety and mobility projects. Consistent with prior direction, the updated standards should expressly contemplate modifying preferential parking protocols during daytime hours to permit business and commercial parking in appropriate zones, thereby providing replacement parking capacity for corridors where safety projects reallocate on-street parking, while preserving residential priority during evening and overnight hours. In addition, on streets with sufficient width and appropriate operating conditions, staff also plans to evaluate perpendicular or back-in angled parking as a means of increasing on-street parking supply. Proposals outside Council-approved eligibility or standards would continue to require Council consideration. Proposed Municipal Code amendments would be presented at an upcoming Council meeting.

State and Federal Regulatory Context

Implementation of a Safe System approach depends in part on the legal authority available to local agencies. While Santa Monica can improve many internal processes and implement a range of roadway-safety treatments under existing local authority, other tools are enabled, limited, or regulated by state or federal law. Recent and pending legislation illustrates this relationship.

Senate Bill 720 established a newer statewide framework for civil automated red-light enforcement. Assembly Bill 382 provides additional authority for local agencies to establish 20 mph speed limits in qualifying school zones, creating another tool for the City's speed-management strategy. Assembly Bill 645 authorizes automated speed-safety enforcement in a limited number of named jurisdictions, but Santa Monica is not currently eligible. Pending Senate Bill 1292 would authorize Santa Monica to test enhanced automated curb-management and enforcement tools that are not fully available under the existing SB 532 framework.

These examples illustrate that achieving Vision Zero requires both effective local implementation and continued attention to the evolving state and federal regulatory framework. Staff will continue to identify opportunities to implement newly available authority and to evaluate legislative changes that could provide additional tools to advance roadway safety.

5. Items Identified for the LRSP and Updated Vision Zero Action Plan.

The February 2026 Council direction identified important questions about how roadway safety should be weighed alongside emergency response, transit operations, goods movement, parking and loading, business access, neighborhood circulation, project-delivery speed, community engagement, and limited staff and funding capacity. This study session focuses on establishing the Safe System framework and clearer implementation processes rather than resolving all project-level tradeoffs. The LRSP will provide updated technical analysis and a prioritized safety program, and the subsequent Vision Zero Action Plan will use that work to present Council with more specific choices, implementation priorities, and resource implications. Having the broader roadway-safety

tradeoff discussion with review of the LRSP and updated Action Plan will allow future Council direction to be grounded in current locations, crash patterns, systemic risks, countermeasures, costs, operational effects, and implementation opportunities.

6. Future Policy and Accountability Framework

Updated Vision Zero Action Plan

Staff anticipates returning to Council with an updated Vision Zero Action Plan after completion of the LRSP. The Action Plan would establish a new planning horizon, priority projects and programs, interim performance targets, responsible departments, funding strategies, implementation schedules, and a manageable set of outcome and delivery measures.

The Action Plan could establish a recurring multidisciplinary Safe System review process and define how the City responds when implementation or safety outcomes are not on track. Potential responses could include accelerating quick-build work, revising project-selection criteria, redirecting resources, seeking additional funding, modifying operations or maintenance practices, or returning to Council when policy barriers or significant tradeoffs require direction.

Annual Performance Reporting

The updated Action Plan should include a concise annual reporting framework so Council and the community can track both safety outcomes and delivery of adopted actions. Measures could include fatal and severe-injury trends, progress on priority networks and projects, speed-management and traffic-calming implementation, and other indicators that can be maintained consistently over time.

The Action Plan should determine the final measures and reporting format, balancing transparency with staff capacity and focusing on indicators that are directly useful for evaluating progress and adjusting the work program.

Relationship to Street Repaving, Capital Planning, and Grants

Roadway-safety work is most efficient when coordinated with paving, utility work, signal upgrades, accessibility improvements, private development, and grant opportunities. The updated framework should identify how safety priorities are incorporated early enough to influence project scope and funding applications. It should also establish when the City should advance a quick-build treatment rather than wait for a future permanent project and how temporary improvements should transition into permanent capital work when they prove successful.

Next Steps

Following the study session, staff will document Council direction and incorporate it into the LRSP, final Neighborhood Traffic Calming Toolkit, greenway implementation, related program updates, and development of an updated Vision Zero Action Plan. Staff anticipates the following next steps:

- Complete the Local Roadway Safety Plan, including the detailed five-year crash analysis, updated High Injury Network, development and evaluation of a complementary High-Risk Network, countermeasure assessment, and project-prioritization framework. The High-Risk Network methodology and its use will be further vetted through the LRSP process.

- Finalize the Neighborhood Traffic Calming Toolkit, including the intake process, treatment-specific engagement thresholds, the proposed 51 percent/25 percent neighborhood-support framework for diversion, equity and network-effect criteria, emergency-access and route-redundancy review and monitoring standards.

- Continue development of the Washington Avenue and Michigan Avenue neighborhood greenway work and use the Toolkit and standard plans to advance appropriate traffic-calming and diversion treatments. Following Council direction on the neighborhood-support for framework for diversion, qualifying diverters that are part of previously approved programs or meet adopted standards could be advanced

administratively after the applicable neighborhood-support threshold, engineering analysis, interdepartmental review, notice/outreach, and monitoring.

- Continue development of the Smart Curb Management pilot on 2nd and 4th Streets under existing SB 532 authority, refine the relationship among digital payment, officer-based enforcement, and available automated tools, and return to Council with any required enabling ordinance, contract action, or other approval. Continue monitoring SB 1292 and adjust the pilot framework if additional authority becomes available.

- Return to Council with proposed changes to the Personal Delivery Device Municipal Code and Administrative Regulation and Residential Preferential Parking Municipal Code reflective of Council direction.

- Continue vendor procurement, analysis of the initial two intersections, preparation of the required ATES Impact Report, administrative procedures, and program development for the SB 720-compliant Automated Traffic Enforcement System, and return to Council for contract award, site findings, and other required actions before enforcement begins.

- Evaluate implementation of Assembly Bill 382 school-zone speed authority and continue monitoring state legislation affecting automated speed enforcement, curb management, vehicle regulation, and other Safe System tools, including opportunities to seek or support expanded local authority where appropriate.

- After completion of the LRSP, develop an updated Vision Zero Action Plan with a prioritized list of projects and programs, measurable actions, responsibilities, timelines, funding strategies, performance reporting, multidisciplinary implementation practices, and any project-level tradeoffs or policy questions that warrant Council direction.

Staff will return to Council for formal action when an ordinance, budget action, contract award, plan adoption, or other approval is required.

Environmental Review

This Vision Zero study session is not a “project” subject to CEQA. Pursuant to CEQA Section 21065, the study session does not meet the definition of a “project” subject to CEQA because it will not “cause either a direct physical change in the environment, or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment.” Additionally, CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b) provides that a “project” does not include general policy and procedure making. The study session concerns planning and potential future actions that have not been approved, adopted, or funded. Implementation of future projects or programs would be subject to any required environmental review and approval. City Attorney staff will confirm the appropriate CEQA finding and citation before publication.

Financial Impacts and Budget Actions

There is no immediate financial impact or budget action associated with conducting the study session and receiving Council direction. This is a study session and staff is seeking further Council guidance. Feasibility of proposed courses of action is not guaranteed and remains subject to staff resources, funding, and engineering analysis to be determined later. Staff will identify financial impacts and request budget action when specific plans, programs, projects, or procurements return to Council.

Implementation pace will continue to depend on available staff, consultant support, construction capacity, maintenance resources, and funding. The LRSP and updated Vision Zero Action Plan will identify future resource needs and any corresponding program tradeoffs for Council consideration.

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Approved	**Forwarded to Council**
	
Christopher Dishlip, Director of Public Works 9/1/2026	Oliver Chi, City Manager 9/1/2026

Attachments:

A. Santa Monica Bicycle Action Plan & Bicycle Action Plan Amendment - Web Link
B. Pedestrian Action Plan 2016
C. Santa Monica Local Roadway Safety Plan 2022
D. Traffic Calming Toolkit Cutsheets_Speed Humps
E. Traffic Calming Toolkit Cutsheets_Traffic Diverter