

**VISION ZERO RESOLUTION**

**Establishing a Vision Zero Policy to eliminate fatalities and serious injuries that are a result of crashes within Athens-Clarke County rights-of-way by 2037.**

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MAYOR AND COMMISSION OF ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY:

WHEREAS, Athens-Clarke County experiences an entirely preventable loss of life annually due to traffic crashes, constituting a public health crisis, with an average of 13 people killed per year and an average of 56 seriously injured per year over the last 9 years; and

WHEREAS, 2021 ended with the highest recorded number of fatalities in a single year with a combined loss of life of 23 people with 5 pedestrian, 1 cyclist, and 17 vehicular fatalities and 2021 also ended with 50 serious injuries including 6 pedestrian, 2 cyclist, and 42 vehicular related crashes; and

WHEREAS, traffic-related fatalities and serious injuries are on the rise nationally and within Athens-Clarke County, the likelihood of fatal crashes has increased 200% from 2017 to 2021, exceeding that of the entire state of Georgia by 23.7 percent; and

WHEREAS, most traffic-related deaths and serious injuries stem from inadequate road and intersection designs, poor driver behavior, limited sight lines, and increasing traffic; and

WHEREAS, 75% of fatal and serious injuries in Athens-Clarke County occurred at intersections; and

WHEREAS, a commitment to Vision Zero is a commitment to life and equitable opportunity for people in Athens-Clarke County; and

WHEREAS, national data highlights the disproportionate rate of pedestrian fatalities among Black and Hispanic people, showing that they represent 31% of the total population yet 44% of pedestrian fatalities, while White people comprise 62% of the total population and 52% of pedestrian fatalities; and

WHEREAS, seniors, children, people of color, people with disabilities, people in low income communities, people walking, and people bicycling face a disproportionate risk of traffic injuries and fatalities; and

WHEREAS, Athens-Clarke County has committed to prioritizing our most vulnerable roadway users by aiming to identify and address racial and socioeconomic inequalities in Athens; and

WHEREAS, the tenets of a Vision Zero commitment are supported in existing Athens-Clarke County plans and policies, including the Athens in Motion Bike and Pedestrian Master

Plan, the Updated Complete Streets Policy, the Envision Athens Action Agenda, and the Athens-Clarke County Comprehensive Plan; and

WHEREAS, implementing a Vision Zero commitment will require support and contributions from a transdisciplinary group of stakeholders, including Athens-Clarke County Departments, administration, residents, business owners, and visitors to Athens-Clarke County, acting as individuals and collectively through neighborhood or advocacy organizations to improve the safety, comfort, and usability of City streets for all users; and

WHEREAS, Athens-Clarke County will join other leading cities around the nation and globe in their commitment to eliminate traffic deaths and serious injuries on our streets, work which has demonstrated success when coupled with adequate funding and staffing levels for its implementation and will carefully consider the successes and challenges in other cities implementing Vision Zero policies

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Mayor and Commission of Athens-Clarke County, Georgia:

**Section 1:** Athens-Clarke County commits to a goal of a 50% reduction in deaths and serious injuries that are a result of crashes on City streets by 2032 and a goal of zero deaths and serious injuries that are a result of crashes on City streets by 2037; and

**Section 2:** The Vision Zero Action Plan will put equity at its forefront, striving to impact the most vulnerable and dependent users of the most dangerous parts of the transportation network to improve the health and well-being of those traveling on streets in Athens-Clarke County and the plan will use data and community outreach to develop strategies for identifying hazards to persons walking, bicycling, using transit, and riding mobility devices; and

**Section 3:** Athens-Clarke County acknowledges that achieving this goal requires significant effort and resources, and will develop a Vision Zero Action Plan following the passage of this resolution. The Director of Transportation & Public Works or his designee will establish a comprehensive and inclusive Vision Zero Task Force to advance the Vision Zero commitment and guide the work of the Vision Zero Action Plan which will specifically engage members of the community,

**Section 4:** The Mayor and Commission hereby direct the Manager and ACCGov staff to support this resolution.

SO RESOLVED, this \_\_\_\_ day of August 2022.

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Mayor Kelly Girtz

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Commissioner Patrick Davenport, District 1

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Commissioner Jesse Houle, District 6

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Commissioner Mariah Parker, District 2

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Commissioner Russell Edwards, District 7

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Commissioner Melissa Link, District 3

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Commissioner Carol Myers, District 8

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Commissioner Allison Wright, District 4

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Commissioner Ovita Thornton, District 9

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Commissioner Tim Denson, District 5

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Commissioner Mike Hamby, District 10

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk of Commission

**THE UNIFIED GOVERNMENT OF ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY  
COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM**

**SUBJECT:** A Resolution to Adopt a Vision Zero Approach

**DATE:** June 28, 2022

**BUDGET INFORMATION:**

REVENUES: N/A

EXPENSES: N/A

ANNUAL:

CAPITAL:

OTHER:

FUNDING SOURCE: N/A

**COMMISSION ACTION REQUESTED ON:** August 2, 2022

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**PURPOSE:**

To request that Mayor and Commission:

- a. Adopt a Vision Zero Resolution, as shown in **Attachment #1**; and
- b. Authorize the Mayor and appropriate staff to execute all related documents.

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**HISTORY:**

1. Between March 2017 and August 2018, Transportation & Public Works (T&PW) staff, Toole Design Group, and the Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan Committee developed a Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, branded Athens in Motion (AiM), which sets as a short-term task to develop a Vision Zero Action Plan in partnership with Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), Georgia Department of Public Safety, Clarke Central School District (CCSD), UGA and all other ACCGov Departments.
2. On October 2, 2018, Mayor and Commission (M&C) accepted the AiM Plan.
3. On June 4, 2019, M&C adopted a resolution forming the Athens in Motion Commission (AiMC), stating in Article 1.4, *"The AiMC is advisory in nature and is charged with the responsibility of recommending projects, policies, and initiatives to the Mayor and Commission"*
4. On June 7, 2022, M&C approved the FY23 budget, allocating funds for a Vision Zero Safety Specialist position.

5. On June 28, 2022, AiMC voted to support the proposed Vision Zero Resolution.

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**FACTS & ISSUES:**

1. The Vision Zero Network, a national network of cities committed to eliminating traffic fatalities by a set date, identifies six key elements that set Vision Zero apart from traditional road safety efforts.
  - a. Traffic deaths are preventable. Zero is upheld as the only acceptable number of traffic fatalities and the word “accident” is eliminated from the traffic safety vocabulary. Serious and fatal crashes are entirely preventable; they are not accidents and they are not inevitable.
  - b. System failure is the problem. In the Vision Zero framework, individuals are not the problem. It is flaws in the system – from planning through design, construction and maintenance – that allow roads to have no safe crossings or which set up conflicts between high-speed motor vehicles and pedestrians and bicyclists. Ticketing pedestrians for jaywalking where there are no crosswalks or sidewalks is not going to solve the issue or change people’s behavior.
  - c. Road safety is a public health issue. While traditional approaches to transportation safety have prioritized reducing or preventing collisions, Vision Zero focuses on preventing injuries and fatalities. Engineers are challenged to eliminate the circumstances in which a human body may be exposed to crash forces it cannot survive.
  - d. The Safe System approach is holistic. Roadway design is a part of the issue, but so are land use and development decisions, school siting choices, housing policies, and a host of factors that affect our transportation options and choices. The tension between speed and safety in Athens-Clarke County has as much to do with land use as it does road design.
  - e. Data drives decisions. Vision Zero demands a relentless focus on eliminating fatalities and serious injuries first. Preventing red light running and speeding through automated enforcement, for example, may increase rear-end collisions...but reduces fatal and serious injury crashes.
  - f. Social equity is a key goal and component of Vision Zero. Traffic crashes in Athens-Clarke County disproportionately affect vulnerable populations, particularly among those who do not have access to a motor vehicle and who are more likely to be dependent on walking, biking, and transit. Communities of concern must be meaningfully engaged in addressing the safety, personal security, accessibility, and larger cultural and societal issues around road safety and community development.

2. Athens-Clarke County experiences an entirely preventable loss of life annually due to traffic crashes, constituting a public health crisis, with an average of 13 people killed per year and an average of 56 seriously injured per year over the last 9 years
3. 2021 ended with the highest recorded number of fatalities in a single year with a combined loss of life of 23 people with 5 pedestrian, 1 cyclist, and 17 vehicular fatalities.
4. 2021 ended with 50 serious injuries including 6 pedestrian, 2 cyclists, and 42 vehicular related crashes.
5. Traffic-related fatalities and serious injuries are on the rise nationally and within Athens-Clarke County, the likelihood of fatal crashes has increased 200% from 2017 to 2021, exceeding that of the entire state of Georgia by 23.7 percent.
6. Most traffic-related deaths and serious injuries stem from inadequate road and intersection designs, poor driver behavior, limited sight lines, and increasing traffic.
7. 75% of fatal and serious injuries in Athens-Clarke County occurred at intersections.
8. Crashes on ACCGov streets necessitate a comprehensive and systemic approach to street planning, design, policy, enforcement, legal processes, education and communication in order to provide the most powerful solution to solve the problem.
9. Many VZ initiatives are geared towards lowering speeds due to the higher rate of fatal crashes at higher speeds. An example of how design and policy impact safety is shown through multiple studies that demonstrate the chances of a pedestrian being killed by a car traveling 20 mph is 10% while the chances of being killed when struck by a car traveling 40 mph is 80%.
10. Athens in Motion, ACCGov's transportation action plan, emphasizes safety for all roadway users and promotes a focus through its action items on reducing single occupancy vehicle rides and encouraging walking, bicycling, transit, and car-sharing or carpooling
11. If the Vision Zero Resolution is passed by M&C, staff will begin the development of a Vision Zero Action Plan. The Mayor will establish a comprehensive and inclusive Vision Zero Task Force to advance the Vision Zero commitment and guide the work of the Vision Zero Action Plan which will specifically engage members of the community.

12. If the Vision Zero Resolution is passed by M&C, Athens-Clarke County is committing to a goal of a 50% reduction in deaths and serious injuries that are a result of crashes on public streets by 2032 and a goal of zero deaths and serious injuries that are a result of crashes on public streets by 2037.
13. If the Vision Zero Resolution is passed by M&C, the Vision Zero Action Plan will put equity at its forefront, striving to impact the most vulnerable and dependent users of the most dangerous parts of the transportation network to improve the health and well-being of those traveling on streets in Athens-Clarke County, and the plan will use data and community outreach to develop strategies for identifying hazards to persons walking, bicycling, using transit, and riding mobility devices. When the recommended draft of the plan is complete, it will be brought back to the M&C for a vote on its acceptance.
14. These recommendations support the following ACCGov Strategic Plan Goal & Strategy:
- Safely Move Around Athens, Strategy E: *Enhance safety for all modes of transportation.*

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**OPTIONS:**

1. The Mayor and Commission:
  - a. Adopt a Vision Zero Resolution, as shown in **Attachment #1**; and
  - b. Authorize the Mayor and appropriate staff to execute all related documents.
2. Mayor and Commission do not approve the Vision Zero Resolution.
3. Mayor and Commission defined option.

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**DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDED ACTION:** Option #1 a and b.

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**DEPARTMENT:** Transportation & Public Works

Prepared by: Daniel Sizemore, Bike, Pedestrian & Safety Coordinator



Stephen Bailey  
Director

June 29, 2022

Date:

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**ADMINISTRATIVE COMMENTS:**

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**ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATION:** Option # 1 a & b



Manager

July 14, 2022

Date:

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Attachment #1: Vision Zero Resolution