



2020 Vision Zero Report Card



City of Somerville, MA
Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone

Somervillema.gov/VisionZero

Introduction

This is the City of Somerville's Year One Vision Zero Report Card.

What is Vision Zero?

Vision Zero is a worldwide advocacy campaign focused on reducing and eliminating deaths and serious injuries from our transportation system.

What is the Vision Zero Action Plan?

Finalized in 2020, the Vision Zero Action Plan was developed by a task force of dedicated resident volunteers.

The plan details actions the City will take over five years to work towards significant safety improvements on our streets and in City operations.

What is the Vision Zero Report Card?

This report card assesses the City's progress towards achieving the 0 - 2 year actions during calendar year 2020, and describes key focus areas for Vision Zero work in 2021.

How to read this report

This report is a summary of the City's progress towards Vision Zero in 2020. If you want to read the full Vision Zero Action Plan and review a detailed spreadsheet of the 0-2 year actions, see: somervillema.gov/visionzero.

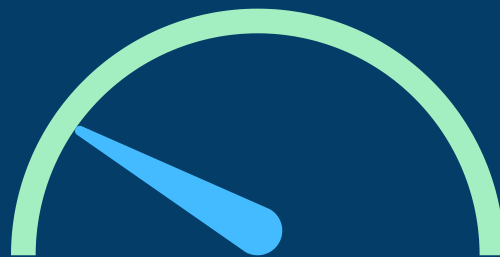
The following pages are organized by the four objective areas:

- Create a Robust Data Framework
- Design Safe Streets
- Operate Safe Streets
- Create a Culture of Safety

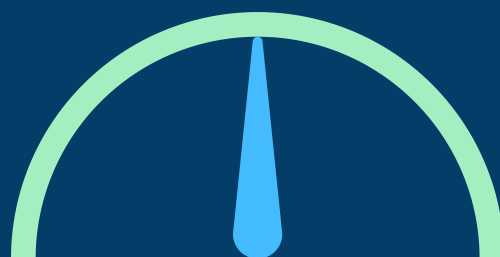
In each section, there is a summary of the objective, the City's key accomplishments in 2020, some of the challenges, and the planned focus areas for 2021.

Each summary is followed by a report card that assesses the City's progress within each objective. The report card includes an overall rating as well as a detailed listing of the current status of each action. The ratings are described below.

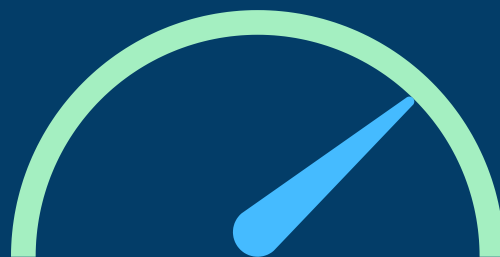
Needs Improvement: No Actions in the 0 - 2 year timeframe completed; all are either in progress or not started.



Making Progress: 1/3 to 3/4 of the Actions in the 0 - 2 year timeframe are either completed or in progress.



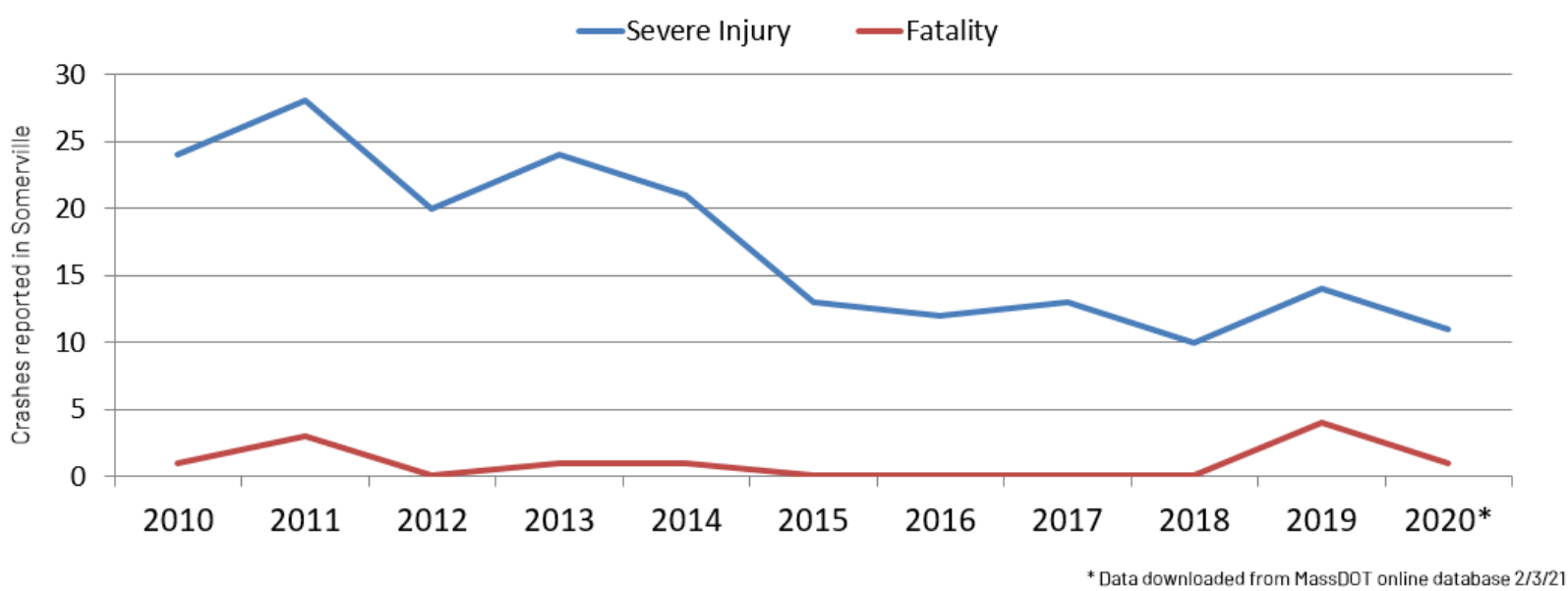
Showing Leadership: greater than 3/4 of the 0 - 2 year actions are either completed or in progress.



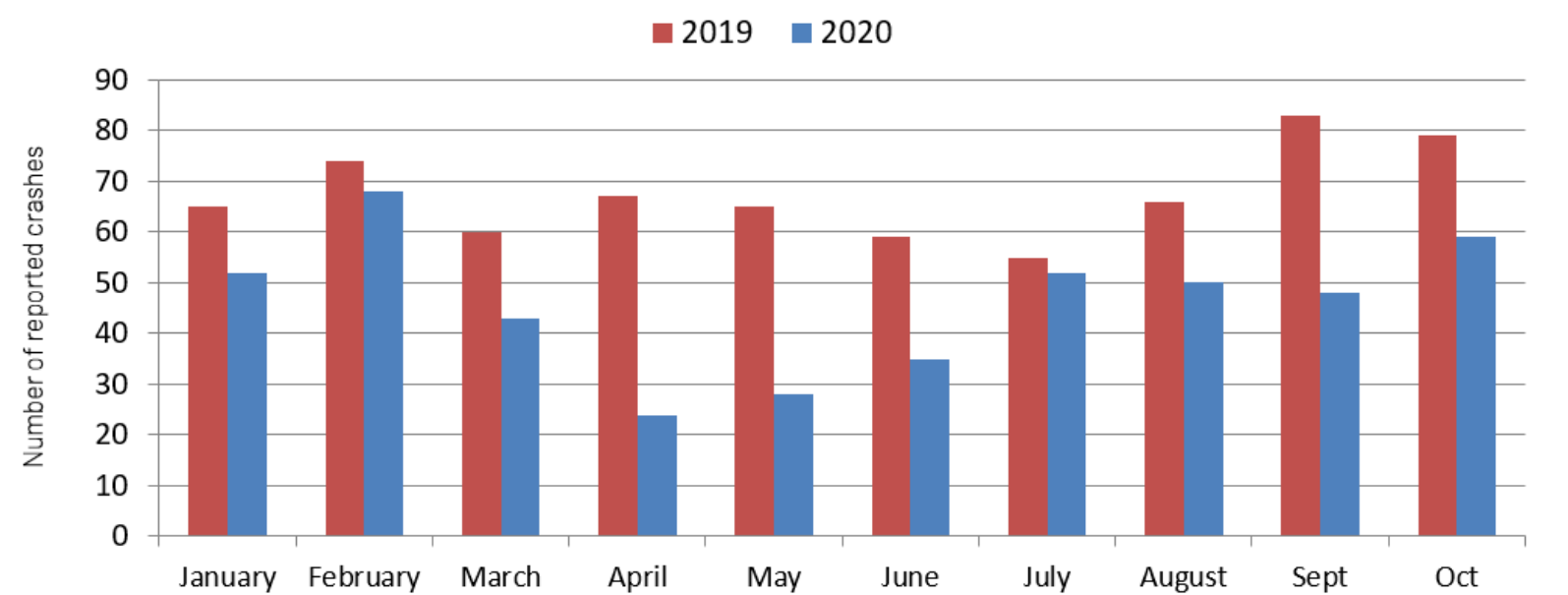
First, some data

State crash data shows a downward trend in the City.

- Severe crashes have been trending downward over the past decade; although, Somerville experienced several fatal crashes in 2019 and 2020.

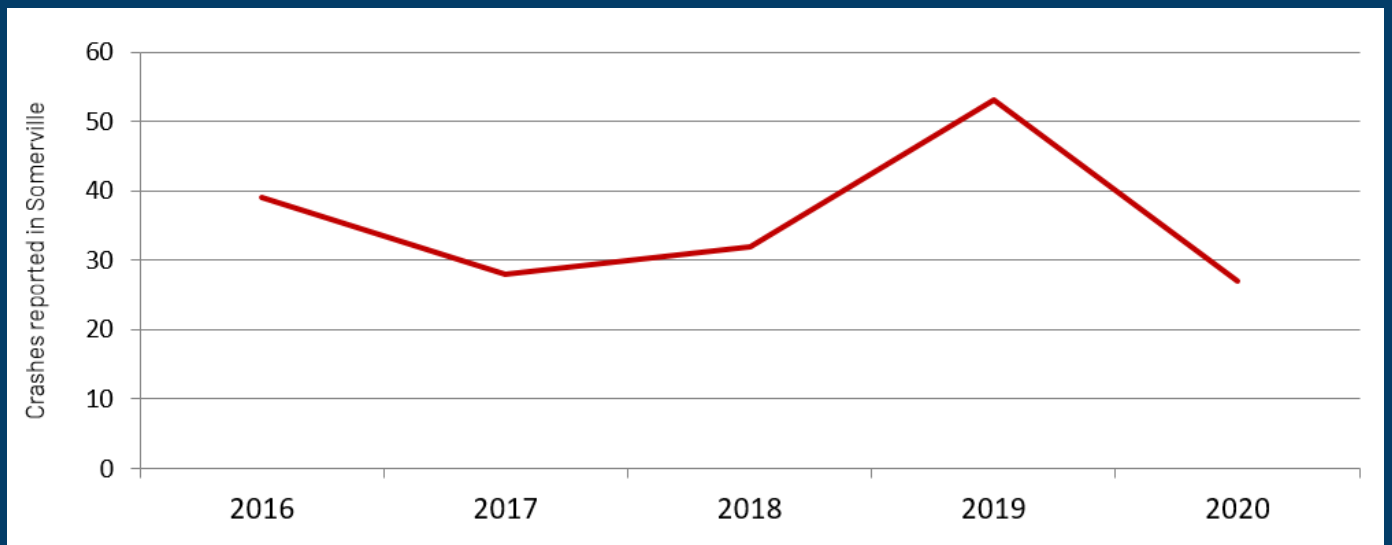


- Reported crashes appear lower in 2020. The difference is more pronounced during the COVID-19 shutdown.

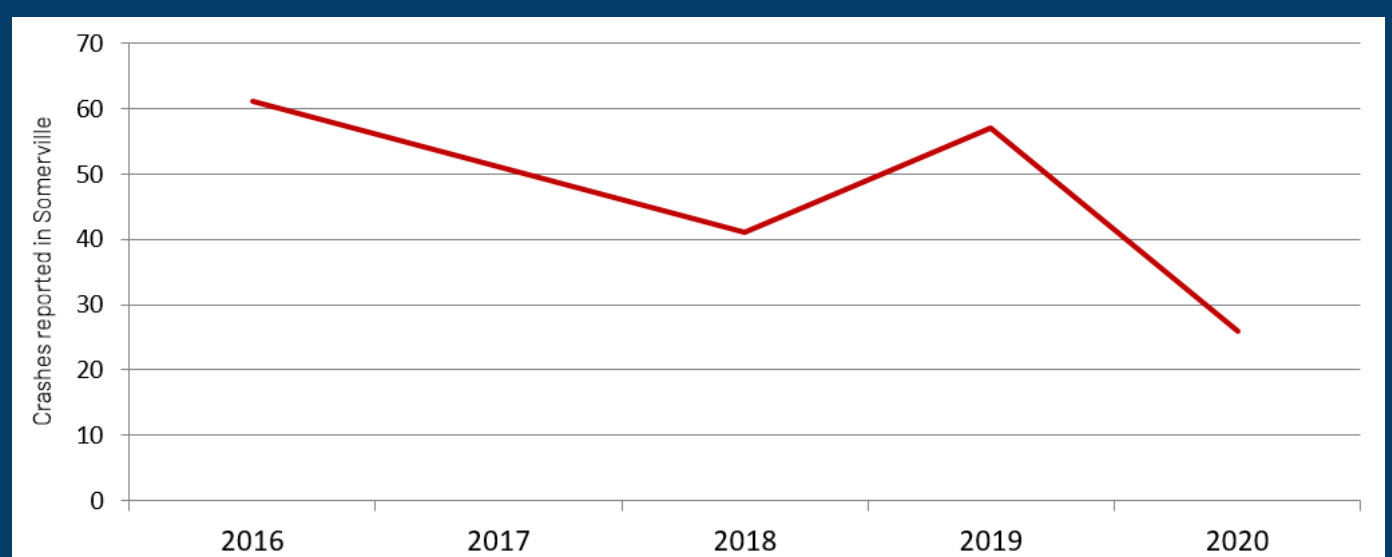


Crash data indicates that there are roughly 35 pedestrian crashes and 45 bicycle crashes annually, with increases in 2019.

Pedestrian crashes



Bicycle crashes



Create a Robust Data Framework

The Objective:

Achieving our Vision Zero goals requires a data-driven approach. The actions in this objective area will help the City gather, analyze, use, and share crash, speed, and other traffic data. A thorough data framework will allow us to understand our safety priorities and evaluate the effectiveness of our interventions.

Key 2020 Accomplishments

- Data collection and analysis for Shared Streets
 - Data collection to analyze impact and operations of new quick-build bus lanes. This work includes a partnership with Tufts University to collect air quality data along Mystic Avenue before and after the peak hour bus lane is implemented.
 - Acquisition of new project planning and data visualization tool, Remix. This will allow us to more easily update and share crash data in an interactive map format online.
 - Mobility and safety trends report posted on the Mobility Division's COVID-19 Mobility Strategy website.
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Challenges

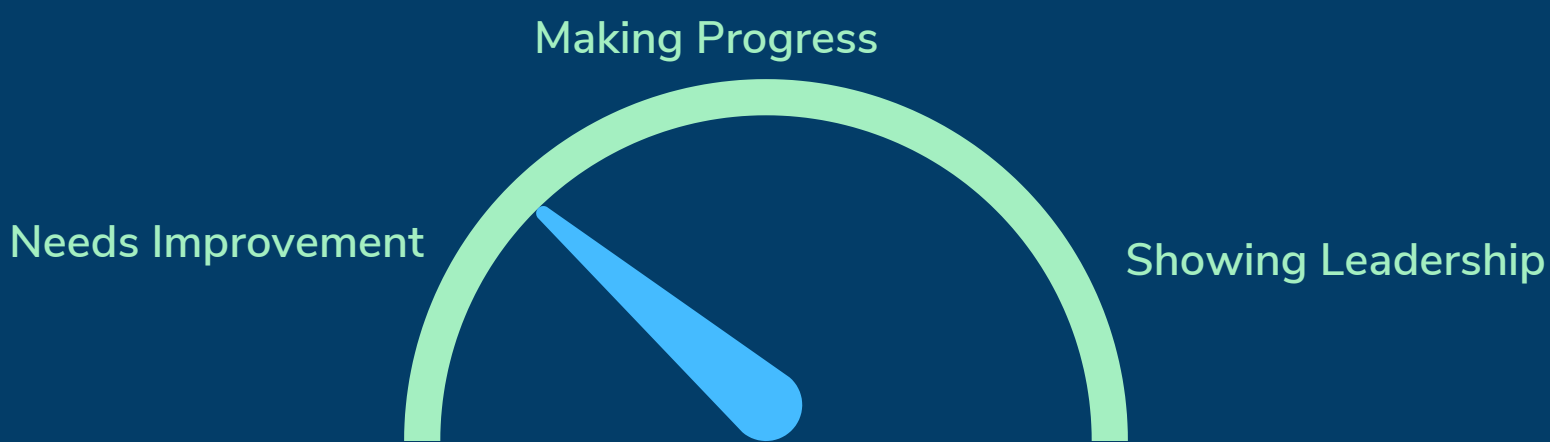
- Finding an easily accessible and consistently up-to-date source for crash data can be challenging. Due to the lag time in updating the state crash database, that source can omit locally significant crashes for a period of time. On the other hand, the City database is organized by each individual involved in a crash, and is time intensive to format in a way that can be communicated to the public on the Vision Zero Portal.
- In order to better measure the safety impacts of our projects, data collection is key. Formalizing our project evaluation would be helped if the Mobility Division had a contract for data collection.
- One of the central elements of Vision Zero is transparent data and communication of that data. Keeping the website updated and understanding how people use it and engage with it, requires dedicated staff time.

Create a Robust Data Framework

Data framework development in 2021 will focus on:

- Maintaining and updating the Vision Zero Portal
 - Continued data collection with a focus on obtaining more precise data at our annual bike and pedestrian count locations.
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Report Card: Data Framework



STRATEGY: TRAFFIC MONITORING PROGRAM

2 out of 3 actions in progress.

- In progress: Conduct before and after data collection for all safety improvements.
 - In progress: ID 10 locations for annual speed, class, and volume monitoring.
 - Not started: ID 10 locations counted as part of the annual pedestrian/bike counts and collect data with engineering grade Turning Movement Counts.
-

STRATEGY: IMPROVE CRASH DATA

1 action in progress.

- In progress: Set up a process for people to report crashes or near misses for all modes that do not involve serious injury or significant property damage to the city.
-

STRATEGY: VISION ZERO PORTAL

2 out of 3 actions in progress.

- In progress: Publish data collected from implemented projects and annual monitoring on the Vision Zero website.
- In progress: Update the Vision Zero web page regularly and continually seek user feedback on the portal.
- Not started: Quantify visitors to the Vision Zero website and report trends on an annual basis.

Design Safe Streets

The Objective:

Roadway design is one of the most important factors in reducing vehicle speeds and increasing safety. The actions in this objective area help ensure slower speeds and safer conditions for all road users, and specifically, our most vulnerable.

Key 2020 Accomplishments

- Completion of new pavement markings, sidewalk reconstruction (including bumpouts to shorten crossings) along Upper and Lower Medford St.
- Implemented 10 miles of quick-build traffic calming through the Shared Streets initiative as part of the City's COVID response.
- Implemented quick-build intersection safety improvements through the addition of two sections of bus priority lanes in Davis Square and closing the slip lane at Highland and Elm Street in Davis Square.
- Constructed permanent speed humps along Beacon Street at Forest, Sacramento, and Properzi.
- Reconstructed over two miles of sidewalk along Medford St., Sycamore St., Somerville Ave., and Munroe St.
- For a look at more details on the street design projects accomplished in 2020, check out the Vision Zero website: <https://www.somervillema.gov/visionzero>



Red-backed crosswalks painted as a quick and proven way to slow vehicles at crossings



Flex posts installed to provide quick-build bumpouts and pedestrian safety benefits while construction projects are planned

Design Safe Streets

Challenges

- The onset of COVID-19 at the beginning of 2020 resulted in the need for unplanned work to respond to the public health emergency. This caused a redirection of priorities throughout the City, including in the Mobility Division. Examples of unanticipated projects in the Mobility Division include the citywide Shared Streets initiative which resulted in x miles of quick-build traffic calming.
- Also due to the COVID-19 crisis, departments throughout the City had to reexamine their budgets and delay some infrastructure and planning projects.
- Mobility and street safety projects rely on the installation of pavement markings - usually completed by contractors. Pavement markings have to be implemented during dry weather and temperatures over 30 degrees, and pavement markings contractors must balance their workload between several municipalities. Both of these elements can lead to delays in project installation.
- The City of Somerville has 3 major state-owned roadways running through it. These are some of the highest speed and highest volume roads in the City and present some of the most significant safety challenges. The City does not have authority to make changes in these places, but actively works with state partners to make needed safety and mobility improvements.



Designing safe streets in 2021 will focus on:

- Continued implementation of quick-build and permanent safety improvements intersections, crosswalks, and residential streets
- Development of more data-based and standardized approaches for prioritizing project locations and selecting interventions; specific focus on major intersections and mid-block crosswalks.
- Continued analysis of the performance of protected bike lanes and other projects implemented to improve safety for vulnerable road users.

Design Safe Streets

Report Card: Design Safe Streets



STRATEGY: ENHANCE DESIGN OF MAJOR INTERSECTIONS

2 out of 3 actions completed for 2020.

- Completed: Quick-build intersection safety improvements at five major intersections.
- Completed: Permanent physical infrastructure improvements to at least two major intersections
- In progress: Identify and classify each major intersection and develop toolbox for improving; prioritize the list for intervention

STRATEGY: CALM TRAFFIC IN RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS

3 out of 4 actions completed for 2020.

- Completed: Quick-build traffic calming at two key entrances onto low volume residential streets (gateway locations).
- Completed: Quick-build traffic calming at two mid-block locations on residential streets.
- Completed: Permanent traffic calming at four locations on residential streets.
- In progress: Finalize thresholds for traffic calming improvements.

STRATEGY: BUILD SAFE MID-BLOCK CROSSINGS

1 out of 3 actions completed for 2020.

- Completed: Quick-build or permanent traffic calming at three mid-block crosswalks
- In progress: ID all mid-block crosswalks and develop toolbox for improving; prioritize the list for intervention.
- Not started: Develop crosswalk spacing guidelines

Design Safe Streets

STRATEGY: BUILD SAFE PEDESTRIAN ROUTES

4 out of 5 actions completed for 2020.

- **Completed:** Rehabilitate 2 miles of sidewalk.
 - **Completed:** Permanent physical safety or accessibility improvements at 3 bus stops.
 - **Completed:** Permanent physical safety or accessibility improvements at 1 location within 1/4 mi. of a rapid transit station.
 - **In progress:** Develop and publish a sidewalk reconstruction prioritization plan.
-

STRATEGY: ENHANCE AND EXPAND NEIGHBORWAYS

2 out of 3 actions completed for 2020.

- **Completed:** Implement wayfinding signage for existing neighborways.
 - **Completed:** Enhance 3 existing neighborways or designate new streets.
 - **In progress:** Develop a citywide neighborways plan and toolkit for improvements.
-

STRATEGY: GROW NETWORK OF SEPARATED BIKE FACILITIES

1 out of 3 actions in progress.

- **In progress:** Implement and evaluate the performance of two separated bike infrastructure projects.
 - **Not started:** Work with the Somerville Bike Committee and stakeholders to complete a bike network plan.
 - **Not started:** Propose changes to the Complete Streets Ordinance to require, as feasible, application of NACTO's All Ages & Abilities Bicycle Facilities guidance.
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STRATEGY: PREVENT BLOCKING OF BIKE LANES AND CROSSWALKS

1 out of 6 actions completed for 2020.

- **Completed:** Evaluate existing pick-up/drop-off areas, relocate ineffective locations, and add 3 new locations.
- **In progress:** Establish an SOP for the placement of flex posts at crosswalks.
- **In progress:** Reduce stopping in bike lanes and/or crosswalks at 3 problem locations; address with: new loading zone, increased separation, outreach, or new signage.
- **In progress:** Pilot 2 new types of traffic delineators
- **In progress:** Incorporate raised crosswalks and/or raised bike crossings on side streets as part of construction projects.
- **More coordination needed:** Increase enforcement of vehicles stopping in bicycle lanes and crosswalks.

Operate Safe Streets

The Objective:

In addition to our streets being designed safely, we must also ensure that daily operation of our streets prioritizes safety for all users. The actions in this objective area help ensure that we're working towards lowering traffic speeds, improving signals, and creating robust plans for detours and extreme weather.

Key 2020 Accomplishments

- Addition of over 6 miles of 20 mph safety zones.
- Development of initial traffic signal inventory as part of Mobility's COVID-19 response and the citywide outreach campaign to "not touch the button."
- Weekly coordination meetings between Mobility, Engineering, and Parking on project planning, design, and construction issues.
- Monthly coordination between the Mobility Division, Constituent Services, and Communications and Community Engagement.

Challenges

The operation of safe streets requires coordination between multiple departments - to develop policies around street safety, communicate about street safety, and enforce safe behavior. The COVID-19 crisis resulted in staff in numerous key departments getting redirected to direct emergency response-related work.

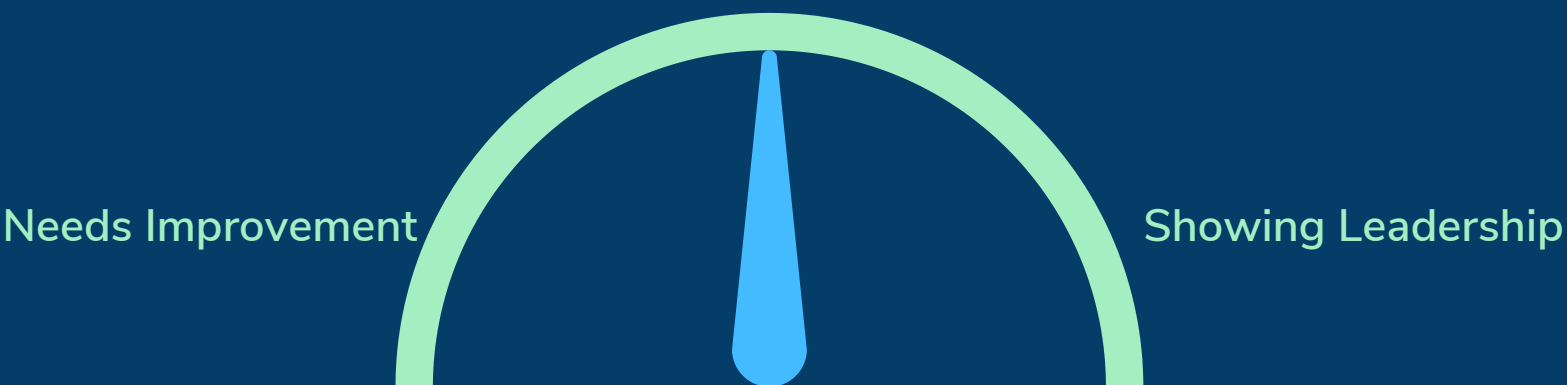
Operation of safe streets in 2021 will focus on:

- Coordination with additional City departments through the Vision Zero Working Group to work on VZ actions related to mitigating the impacts of extreme weather and construction-related mobility impacts.
- Continued/expanded education of City staff, drivers, and residents on safe speed limits.
- Continued expansion of 20 mph safety zones
- New work to develop VZ-related policies, such as a policy for pedestrian phases in traffic signals.

Operate Safe Streets

Report Card: Operate Safe Streets

Making Progress



STRATEGY: REDUCE TRAFFIC SPEEDS

1 out of 2 actions Completed for 2020.

- **Completed for 2020:** Expand 20 mph neighborhood safety zones into additional neighborhoods.
- **More coordination needed:** Continue to educate motorists about the citywide 25 mph speed limit and the safety benefits of driving slower.

STRATEGY: ENSURE EQUITABLE ENFORCEMENT

More coordination with Somerville Police Department needed for these actions.

- **More coordination needed:** Annually target enforcement efforts in and around school zones.
- **More coordination needed:** ID and support additional opportunities for law enforcement to engage in trainings that enhance enforcement outcomes
- **More coordination needed:** Continue to leverage and engage in high visibility enforcement campaigns. Continue to apply for grant funding opportunities relating to traffic safety and roadway user education.
- **More coordination needed:** Annually publish available data on the police department's traffic stop activities on the VZ web page
- **More coordination needed:** Distribute at least 200 bike headlights/taillights and bells annually

STRATEGY: EVALUATE AND MODERNIZE TRAFFIC SIGNALS

2 out of 4 actions in progress.

- **In progress:** Annually conduct one alternative traffic control experiment by converting a signalized location to all-way or partial stop-control.
- **In progress:** Complete an inventory of all traffic signals citywide and identify a strategy and funding source for signal upgrades and improvements.
- **Not started:** Create a city policy on pedestrian phases in traffic signals.
- **Not started:** Annually conduct signal warrant analysis at three existing traffic signals

Operate Safe Streets

STRATEGY: PROVIDE SAFE ROUTES THROUGH CONSTRUCTION

1 out of 3 actions in progress.

- **In progress:** Enforce the existing requirements for contractors to maintain pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access through construction zones and provide accessible detour routes, with advance warning of route changes, when a detour is required.
 - **More coordination needed:** Develop and promote a process for the public to report issues with pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access through construction zones or along detour routes.
 - **More coordination needed:** Evaluate existing requirements for contractors to maintain pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access through construction zones and make recommendations for improvement.
-

STRATEGY: MITIGATE THE IMPACTS OF EXTREME WEATHER

2 out of 3 actions in progress.

- **In progress:** Work with the PTAC and the SBAC to refine existing standard operating procedures for snow storms and extreme weather.
- **In progress:** Annually promote and distribute the Somerville Winter Guide.
- **More coordination needed:** Publish a list of city sidewalks and bicycle lanes that are prioritized for snow removal.



Create a Culture of Safety

The Objective:

Vision Zero will be fully realized through examining our own individual behaviors and making safe transportation decisions. The actions in this objective area focus on resident input and increased outreach to spread the word about Vision Zero expectations for people using our transportation system. In addition, these actions ask us to examine local and state level policies to ensure that we are institutionalizing a regulatory environment that will lead to safer streets.

Key 2020 Accomplishments

- Continued education and engagement through revisions to City communication materials and deployment of VMBs and speed feedback signs.
- Establishment and monthly meetings of the Pedestrian and Transit Advisory Committee.
- Engagement with PTAC and SBAC on the planning and design of numerous key street projects.
- Engagement in regional working group for the development of safe vendor, vehicle, and operational requirements for shared electric scooters.

Challenges

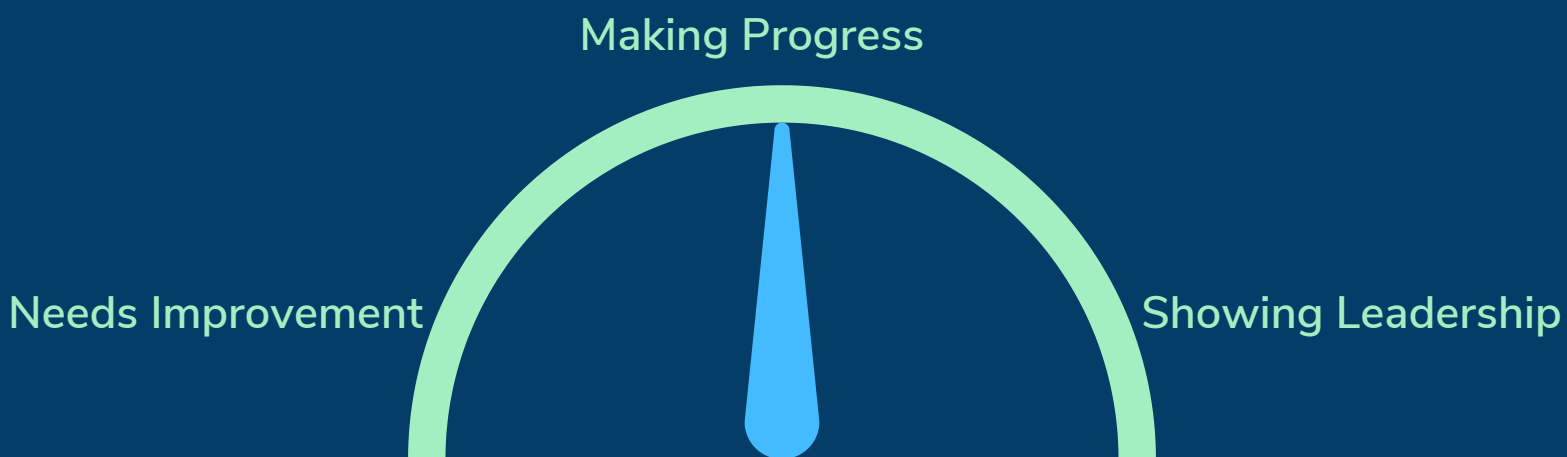
- Many City departments are responsible for Vision Zero implementation. This makes communication among departments and with residents key to understanding the work that is planned and the progress that is made towards accomplishing Vision Zero.
- Similar to our neighboring communities, Somerville's streets are travelled by significant amounts of regional traffic. Communicating about Vision Zero and safety on our streets will require approaches that reach residents as well as people traveling through the City.

Creation of a culture of safety in 2021 will focus on:

- Enhanced interdepartmental coordination through the Vision Zero Working Group.
- Continued outreach to students and families through the Safe Routes to School Program as students return to school.
- Continued and enhanced engagement and education of residents and City staff about Vision Zero and the critical importance of safe driving.
- Interdepartmental coordination to develop a rapid response protocol for responding to serious crashes or fatalities.

Create a Culture of Safety

Report Card: Create a Culture of Safety



STRATEGY: FRAMEWORK OF ADVISORY AND POLICY COMMITTEES

2 out of 5 actions completed for 2020.

- **Completed:** Establish a standing Pedestrian and Transit Advisory Committee (PTAC) to advise the City on pedestrian and transit safety, policies, and improvements
- **Completed:** Collect input from the PTAC and SBAC on proposed streetscape projects within the city that are likely to have a significant impact on safety and livability.
- **In progress:** Work with the MA Vision Zero Coalition to track implementation of this Action Plan by releasing annual progress reports with input from the PTAC and SBAC.
- **In progress:** Release the first Annual Report of the Somerville PTAC.
- **More coordination needed:** Convert the Vision Zero Task Force to an interdepartmental working group that meets quarterly

STRATEGY: EDUCATE AND ENGAGE THE PUBLIC ON VISION ZERO

2 out of 8 actions completed for 2020.

- **Completed:** Procure and deploy five new Variable Message Boards to display traffic safety messaging.
- **Completed:** Procure and deploy five new portable speed feedback trailers or signs, and deploy them where speeding is known to be problematic.
- **In progress:** Update & distribute multi-lingual educational traffic safety materials through a variety of means, including in parking permit and new resident mailers.
- **In progress:** Replace the term “accident” with “crash” or “collision” in all City materials.
- **More coordination needed:** Through the Safe Routes to School Program, work with schools and other community organizations to provide hands-on learning opportunities and encouragement activities for children and caregivers.
- **More coordination needed:** Through the Safe Routes to School Program hold pedestrian, bicycle, and scooter safety trainings for students; and, support school efforts to host an annual walk, ride, or roll school event.
- **Not started:** Annually invite the crossing guard Team Leader and School Dept. representative to attend a meeting of PTAC.
- **Not started:** Develop and distribute a Somerville Street Code.

Somervillema.gov/VisionZero

Create a Culture of Safety

STRATEGY: IMPROVE TRUCK SAFETY

1 out of 4 actions completed for 2020.

- **Completed:** Implement the Ordinance to Safeguard Vulnerable Road Users to reduce the risk of cyclists and pedestrians being struck by a large vehicle.
- **In progress:** Equip all signalized intersections to accept input from oncoming emergency vehicles.
- **In progress:** Administer truck safety training to all City staff who drive city trucks.
- **In progress:** Grow relationships with stakeholders to evaluate best practices for managing and enforcing truck policies and loading zones in Somerville. Work to develop regional solutions.

STRATEGY: CREATE CITY POLICIES AND ADVOCATE FOR STATE LEGISLATION SUPPORTIVE OF VISION ZERO

1 out of 4 actions in progress.

- **In progress:** Work with the advisory committees and regional partners to determine safe vendor, vehicle, and operational requirements for the incorporation of new mobility devices, such as electric scooters, into Somerville's existing transportation ecosystem.
- **More coordination needed:** Issue policies for all City staff who drive as part of their job responsibilities that requires adherence to speed limits and traffic laws and disallows the use of cell phones or other electronic devices while driving.
- **Not started:** Quarterly Meetings of the Vision Zero Working Group will discuss crashes involving City employees.
- **Not started:** Create a rapid response protocol for when serious crashes or fatalities occur.

