



A community group dedicated to biking in Santa Monica and Climate Action Santa Monica. Working to make the City of Santa Monica a more sustainable, bikeable place to live, work and play



June 27, 2017

Dear Mayor, City Council, City management and staff

With the number of crashes involving fatalities or serious injuries still climbing at alarming rates — we reaffirm that the time is now to make a strong commitment to Vision Zero and a true and meaningful investment in safer streets.

On May 9th Council gave clear direction they wanted staff to explore the creation of a staff coordinator to implement the City's commitment to Vision Zero and the need to see real results in reducing serious traffic injuries and fatalities on our streets. Staff's recommendation appears to be an incomplete response to council's direction of creating a position to expedite implementation and to coordinate and capitalize on external and interdepartmental opportunities that may otherwise be lost.

In Santa Monica we have a demonstrated history of how talented and dedicated staff have produced undeniable successes and results. We are aiming for, and have achieved, huge environmental and sustainability successes, such as successful water conservation, implemented a nationally-recognized Wellness Project, and increased biking, a healthy active mobility option that contributes to a healthier environment and community. All of these successes have been reached by dedicating staff and money to achieve these results. The ultimate cost for not meeting our Vision Zero goals is loss of life. Money doesn't have a brain or specific expertise, money cannot make the strategic and tactical decisions to achieve our ultimate commitment to our City's safety goals and Vision Zero — Only people can, the time to start is now.

Fixing problems is more intensive and costs money. Preventative measures save money and in this case save lives. We are now faced with "fixing" outdated planning policies of an auto centric 50's that have recently made safety on our streets exponentially worse — we must be proactive in identifying and addressing solutions. Santa Monica must continue to be a catalyst and leader in protecting the lives of our residents and visitors. We heard our City Manager recount how Bill Bratton was laughed at because he wanted to "prevent crimes". However that didn't stop him and he made his vision a reality in NY! Let us not laugh off proactive implementation to reach our commitment to a safer Santa Monica and Vision Zero. We must progress beyond words on a page and create a proactive, transparent system with dedicated funding and specific actions toward this effort if we truly want to succeed in reducing preventable traffic injuries and fatalities in 10 years.

We understand there are many tradeoffs as we discuss the very real budgetary and financial issues for running our city. There can be no tradeoffs when it comes to the lives of our community and the epidemic of serious injuries and traffic fatalities we are now facing locally, regionally and nationally — we must not continue to dehumanize these preventable deaths and injuries by making them so abstract that they seem as though they are someone else's problem. With this two year budget we must demonstrate true leadership and real investment in the safety of our community. We ask that council's direction be followed and that we expedite necessary changes in practice to institutionalize, catalyze and guide efforts and focus to achieve our goals. We fully support the monetary proposal to jump-start and implement key safety projects. However it is imperative that we use a data-driven process and capable leadership to implement strategies that evaluate our progress and institute adjustments as necessary without collectively diluting the efforts of an already busy staff who continue to implement successes in other related and important roles.

In Santa Monica we lead with initiatives like the Wellbeing Project that prioritizes human health and safety. Let's continue this legacy and keep our streets safe as we encourage active transportation that must also reflect council's priority to our Vision Zero Policy and infrastructure that removes safety barriers to make it a viable choice for our community — in addition to the framework to make safety implementation real.

This letter is submitted on behalf of Santa Monica Spoke and Cris Gutierrez for Climate Action Santa Monica.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cynthia Rose". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Cynthia Rose
Director
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