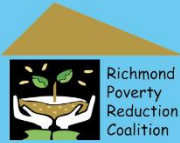


Improving Pedestrian Safety In Richmond Using Vision Zero Strategies

Richmond Poverty Reduction Coalition
2024 Update



Acknowledgments

The Richmond Advocacy & Support Committee (RASC) is an ongoing project of the Richmond Poverty Reduction Coalition. The RASC is a network of low-income Richmond residents who came together in 2017 to learn self-advocacy and leadership skills through studying issues around poverty, and then speaking out about issues that are important to them. The RASC motto is “Our Voices Matter.”

This RPRC project, “Improving Pedestrian Safety in Richmond through Vision Zero Strategies,” has engaged network members directly in hands-on learning around researching, planning, organizing, and delivering a pedestrian safety survey and interview process with target populations.

From September 2023 to June 2024, the project team conducted their second year of research on pedestrian safety while sharing progress with the community. They learned and practiced community outreach, public speaking, data analysis, media relations, and civic engagement, under the facilitation of project coordinator, Athena Estremadura. Team members received a certificate of completion for 50 hours of volunteering as project assistants. They also each received a modest honorarium for the time and experience that they have put into the project.

Thanks to RASC members for seeing this project to completion! They are Lucienne Winder, Adora Patano, Doris Yu, Darren Hayashi, Bellia Uy, and Gethro Yu.

Thanks to project coordinator and lead researcher Athena Estremadura for writing this final report, for leading the RASC through both phases of “Improving Pedestrian Safety in Richmond through Vision Zero Strategies” and for supporting the team in learning and practicing job-transferrable skills that are necessary for the 21st century.

Thanks to our executive assistant, Laina Deer-Ferris, for mentoring the team, keeping our project records, data, and observations, and co-authoring components of this report.

Thank you to Fan (Frank) Yang for providing translation services.

Finally, thank you to our project funders, Literacy Richmond, Richmond Community Foundation, ICBC, and the City of Richmond for their generous support.



In Memory of Michael Hoffman (2023).

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Executive Summary

The 2nd phase of the RASC's *Inquiry into Improving Pedestrian Safety in Richmond through Vision Zero Strategies* compares current community demographics and opinions to those of last year's data collection project and reports on themes that have developed and emerged. This project considers all those who do not drive as their primary mode of transportation to be pedestrians.

It is still recommended that the city of Richmond publish a future-focused commitment to zero pedestrian deaths in official city plans. Our data also strongly supports current developments in provincial legislation that set a standard for enforcing the pedestrian's right of way.

The RASC

The Richmond Advocacy and Support Committee (RASC) is an award-nominated volunteer group that meets twice a month. The RASC's training and project objectives are guided by the 2021 Collaborative Action Plan to Reduce and Prevent Poverty in Richmond and are intended to increase participation opportunities for the network of the Richmond Poverty Reduction Coalition, which has over 12 member organizations serving thousands of people.



RASC members: Lucienne Winder, Adora Patano, Doris Yu, Darren Hayashi, Bellia Uy, Gethro Yu, with RPRC staff: Laina Deer-Ferris and Athena Estremadura. Photo c/o Gethro Yu.

Vision Zero in Richmond

Vision Zero is both a target and an action set by jurisdictions, which strives to remove the possibilities for human error on roads, to minimize the severity of injury that would occur when accidents happen. There is no date or deadline for reaching the target of zero road fatalities. Equitable mobility and safety for all people is the vision.

In its first phase, our project began looking into this vision of eliminating death and serious injury from our roads. We questioned the connection between being a person living in poverty and being a pedestrian, and how the experience of being a pedestrian leaves vulnerable populations more exposed to risk in the transportation system.

As Richmond transportation authorities were identifying and examining accident-prone roads and intersections to address, we observed changes in the design of Richmond’s built environment and increased speed limitations on roads that would reduce vehicular kinetic energy, and prevent death and injury for pedestrians in collisions.

We learned that sharing the responsibility for vulnerable road users is characteristic of a public health lens and a safe systems approach.

We would like to continue advocating for the collaboration and consultation of the low-income network, in the proactive prioritization of everyone’s safe mobility.

Project Objectives and Outcomes

Phase 2 of our project sought to engage and consult the RPRC’s network to accomplish the following:

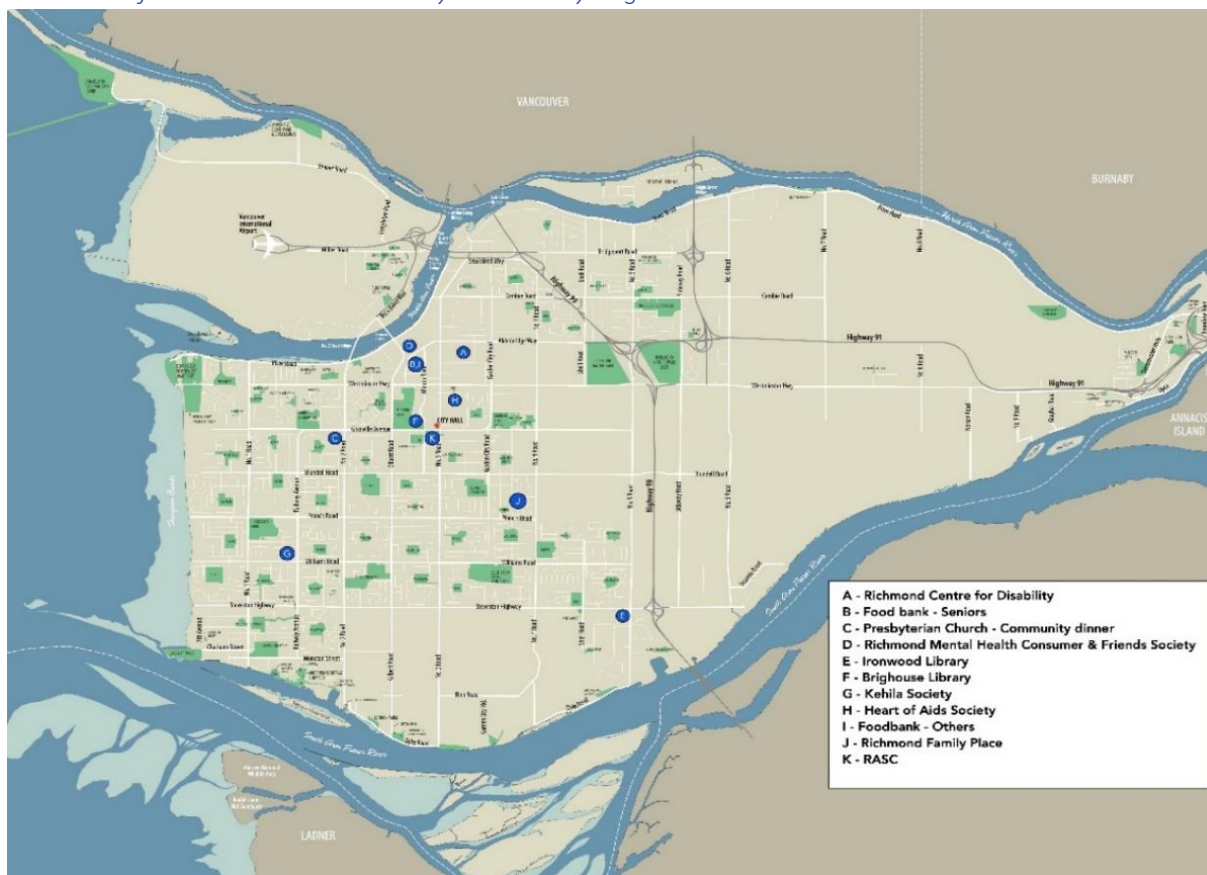
Objectives	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Share research progress and increase awareness of a public health approach to transportation safety with the community through our partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Presented results from last year’s project to 7 partner organizations (Richmond Centre for Disability, Richmond Presbyterian Church, Brighthouse Library, Richmond Mental Health Consumer & Friends Society, Heart of Aids Society, Richmond Family Place)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Enrich Data Collection with a target of 200 surveys, doubling last year’s sample 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Visited 10 community servicing organizations and collected 226 surveys (details on next page) ➤ Accessed translation skills (both written and spoken) through the RASC to overcome language barriers in data collection
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Recommend Priorities and Evaluation Frameworks to the City 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ RPRC representation participated in Richmond’s Traffic Safety Advisory Committee this year

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ This report includes two fact-based recommendations for the City of Richmond
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provide skills development and work experience for RASC members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Awarded 6 RASC members (including 5 new volunteers) with certificates and honoraria acknowledging 50 hours of service and training

Number of Survey Participants by Organization

A) Richmond Centre for Disability	12
B) Foodbank – Seniors	33
C) Presbyterian Church - Community dinner	38
D) Richmond Mental Health Consumer & Friends Society	8
E) Ironwood Library	25
F) Brighthouse Library	38
G) Kehila Society	15
H) Heart of Aids Society	3
I) Foodbank - Others	41
J) Richmond Family Place	3
K) RASC	10
Total	226

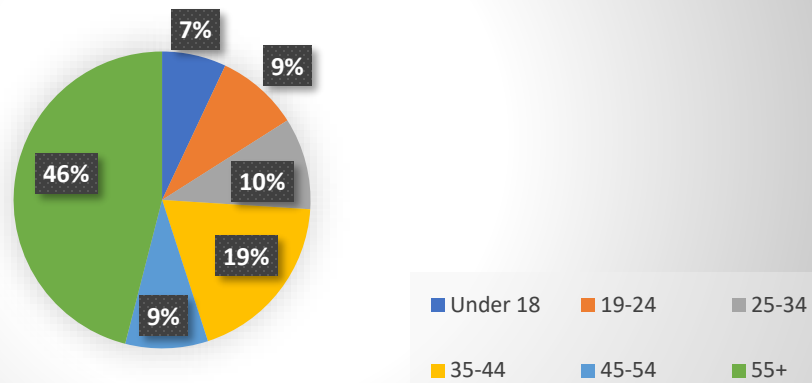
Locations of Presentations and Survey Sessions by Organization



2024 Pedestrian Safety Community Survey Results

Statistics

Participants Age Breakdown



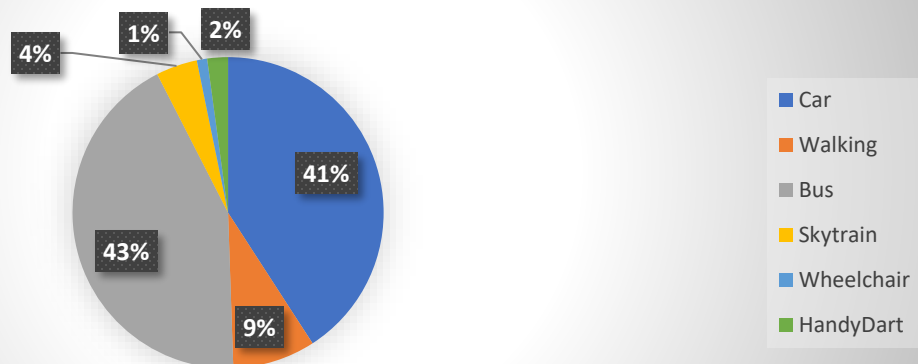
Do you have physical or mobility barriers?

- 20% of the people we surveyed self-reported having physical barriers. This statistic remained unchanged from last year’s results.

Do you push a stroller or walk with a child while commuting at least once a week?

- 20% said they travel with a child/children at least once a week. This statistic also matches last year’s results.

Primary Mode of Transportation

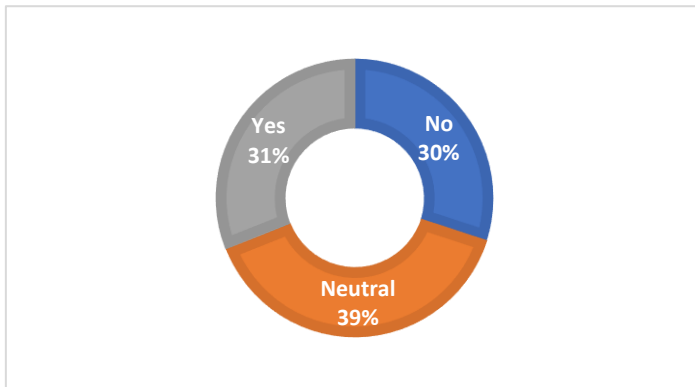


- 50% of people said they used cars to travel at least once a week, not specifying whether as the driver or passenger.
- 41% said traveling by car was their primary mode of transportation, not specifying whether as the driver or passenger.
- 57% of the people we surveyed fit our definition of pedestrian because they do not use a private vehicle for their primary travel needs.

Are you confident that sharing the roads in Richmond as a pedestrian is a safe experience?

- 64% said they felt safe as pedestrians, while the remaining 36% said no.

On a scale of 1-5, in your opinion, do the drivers in Richmond have respect and regard for pedestrians?



- 30% answered with a 1 or a 2.
- 39% ranked our drivers with 3.
- 31% responded with 4 or 5.

Do the cars on the road ever make you feel rushed or unsafe?

- 60% said yes, they feel rushed or unsafe, which is the same as last year.

Have you ever been hit by a car in Richmond?

- 17% of people we surveyed said yes, they had been hit by a car in Richmond.

Have you ever fallen while crossing the street?

- 15% said yes, they had fallen.

Have you ever been in a road incident in Richmond that you didn't report?

- 8% said yes, they were hit, but didn't report.

Do any intersections in Richmond not give you enough time to cross?

- 38% said yes, intersections do not give them enough time to cross. This has decreased from last year’s 68% yes to this question.

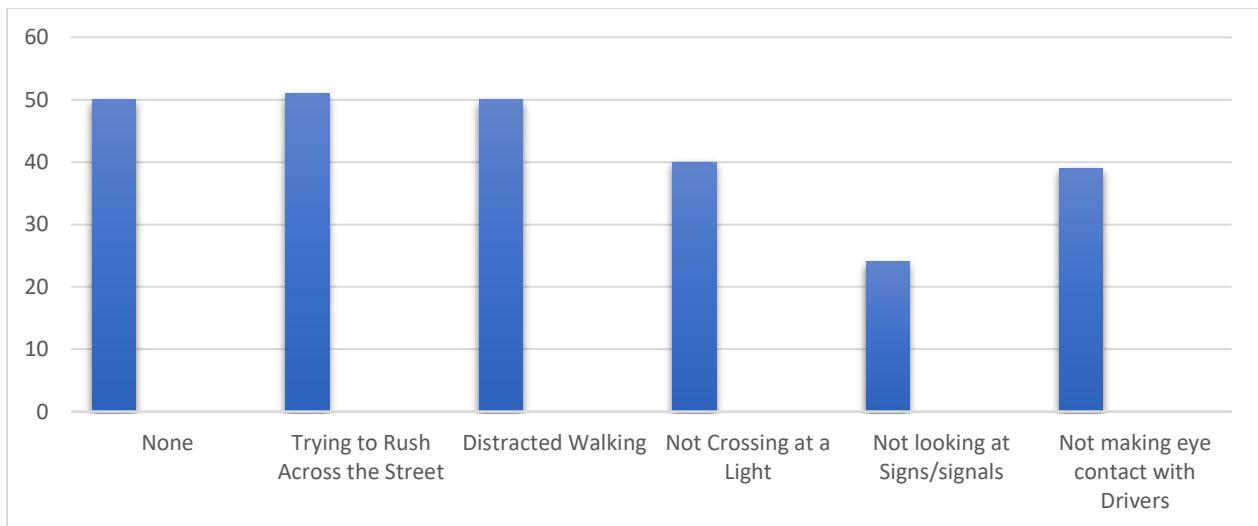
Have you ever been ticketed or warned for jaywalking?

- 13% said yes, they had been warned or ticketed for jaywalking.

What do you do when you get to an intersection and the ‘stop’ hand signal has started flashing?

- Last year, 61% of people said they stopped and waited, and 24% said they sped up to cross the intersection, while the remaining 15% walked across at normal speed.
- This year, 62% said they stop and wait, 34% said they speed up to cross, and 4% walk at a normal pace when they arrive at an intersection where the signal to walk has changed.

What bad habits have you developed as a pedestrian?



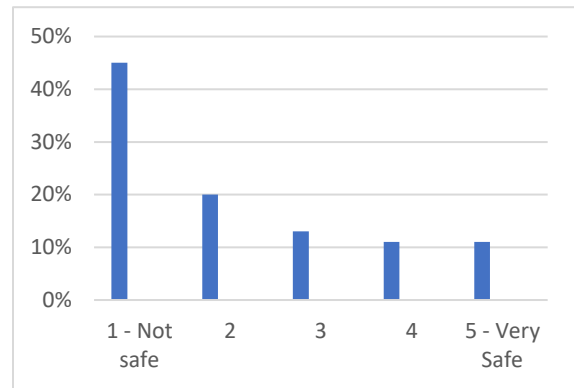
- While 50 people responded with *none*, *Trying to rush across the road* and *distracted walking* were self-identified just as many times as bad habits developed by pedestrians. *Not crossing at designated crosswalks* and *Not making eye contact with drivers at intersections* were the next most identified bad habits that survey participants self-reported, and *Not looking at signs/signals* was the least common bad habit.

What things do you do to feel safer while commuting?

- *Avoiding commuting after dark*, followed by *avoiding rush hour* were checked the most, with about 50% of people checking them as things they do to feel safer. Wearing reflectors was selected half as often as these choices.

How safe do you feel looking at or using technology (phone or headphones) while crossing the street knowing that you have the right of way in a designated crosswalk?

- 45% of people said 1/5, they do not feel safe doing this.
- 20% of people said 2/5, they feel somewhat unsafe.
- 13% of people said 3/5, they felt neutral on the topic.
- 11% said 4/5, they felt somewhat safe.
- 11% said 5/5, they felt very safe using technology in designated intersections.

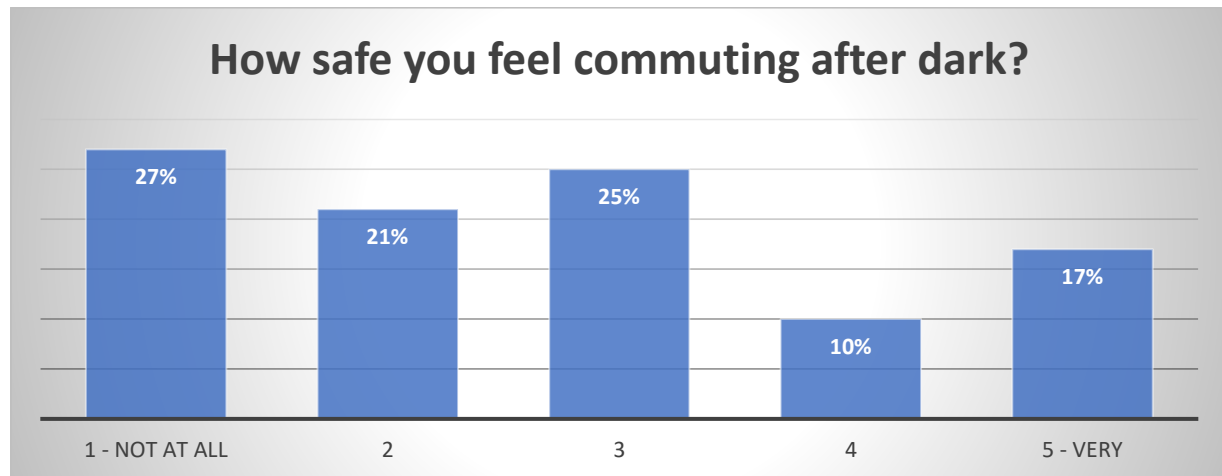


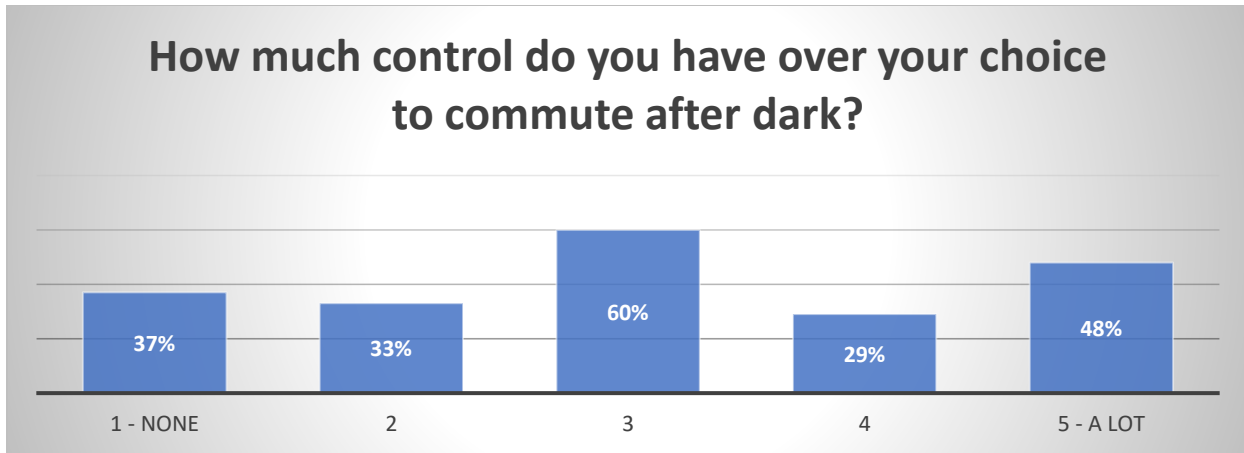
Have you ever got stuck walking down a long block trying to get to the other side of a road that didn't have a crosswalk?

- 35% said yes, they got stuck walking down a long block searching for a crosswalk.

Do you have to walk multiple blocks between bus connections when you commute?

- 43% said yes, they must walk blocks between bus connections.





Question for Drivers only: Have you ever been warned by authorities for turning into an intersection while pedestrians had the right of way?

- 11 people said they had been warned for not yielding to pedestrians.

Critical Themes

Shared Responsibility



Balancing the roles and obligations of both drivers and pedestrians proved to be a nuanced task as we examined the results from our surveys and interviews. Ensuring both safety and efficient traffic flow received a lot of passionate discussion. As the road is a shared space, everyone benefits from understanding each other’s perspectives and adhering to social norms regarding the onus of care.

Vision zero strategies recognize that pedestrians lack physical protection and the potential harm to human bodies holds drivers at a great responsibility to share in the vigilance for pedestrian safety. Very many of our survey participants agreed that they trust the government to control the way we travel on the built environment.

The recommendations in this report recognize this truth and describe actions that the City of Richmond can employ to support accountability and safe accessibility for all road users.

Globalization of Road-Using Habits

As Richmond's community is one of the most culturally diverse in Canada¹, discourse in our community consultations surfaced regarding the different standards that different countries have in road-using norms and habits (including yielding, the use of signals, and pedestrian right-of-way), and discussion of how variations in these standards and norms can lead to confusion or conflict.

In last year's phase 1 research report, communication barriers were cited as contributing to difficulty navigating traffic signs and signals for both drivers and pedestrians, making it riskier for those traveling without a vehicle.

There are many reasons why attempts to educate or apply regulations uniformly across a culturally diverse community may present distinct challenges and higher rates of violations. Perceptions of fairness and adherence to norms can vary, affecting the community's trust in each other or enforcement, as well as compliance with rules.

By involving community leaders to represent and engage in road safety initiatives, Richmond can enhance understanding and compliance with mutual respect and cooperation. As per the first phase of our inquiry, collaboration with the community and key stakeholders is a strength that the RPRC demonstrates and contributes to the city's approach to road safety. Both BC's² and Canada's³ road safety strategies emphasize that a collaborative framework is needed to decide how a community identifies solutions to these needs.

Recommendations

1 - SET A TARGET IN RICHMOND'S OFFICIAL CITY PLAN THAT ENVISIONS ZERO PEDESTRIAN DEATHS IN THE FUTURE

Our first recommendation is a straightforward acknowledgment that we can prioritize pedestrian safety, in the form of a published target, in official Richmond plans. Prioritizing those with no control over whether they are pedestrians or not, in road safety measures, is a statement to residents that it is unethical for the majority to allow individual failures to lead to death or serious injury.

¹ City of Richmond. (2019). *2019-2029 Cultural Harmony Plan*.

https://www.richmond.ca/__shared/assets/culturalharmonyplan2022-2023update72395.PDF

² Province of British Columbia. (2016). *BC Road Safety Strategy: A Collaborative Framework for Road Safety*.

https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/driving-and-transportation/driving/roadsafetybc/strategy/bcrss_2025_final.pdf

³ Canadian Council of Motor Transportation Administrators. (2016). *Towards Zero: The Safest Roads in the World*.

<https://www.roadsafetystrategy.ca/web/road-safety-strategy/files/public/docs/RSS-2025-Report-January-2016-with%20cover.pdf>

The city of Richmond’s focus on influencing road-user behaviour through environment design and policies is one component of effective, early Vision Zero adoption. However, this published commitment to the people is missing from any of Richmond’s city plans.

This show of faith would be an accomplishment for the city because it reciprocates the trust that residents have in transportation authorities to protect their right to safe and equitable mobility.

Examples of such road safety targets in other Metro Vancouver transportation plans are cited below.

2.3.2 TARGET: VISION ZERO

ZERO *No deaths or serious injuries on Burnaby’s transportation network.*

Vision Zero is a systems approach to transportation safety that is premised on the belief that:
 All traffic fatalities and severe injuries can be eliminated, while increasing safe, healthy and equitable mobility for all people.
 For Burnaby, the following interim **Targets** have been set towards achieving Vision Zero:

- BY 2030** 20% reduction in serious injuries or deaths from 2019 baseline data;
- BY 2040** 75% reduction; and,
- BY 2050** 100% reduction

Remember that collaboration and partnership with



ZERO DEATHS | ZERO SERIOUS INJURIES

SAFETY GOAL

Our goal is to move toward zero traffic-related fatalities.

Vancouver’s ultimate safety goal is to eliminate all fatalities from its transportation system.



Transportation 2040
Plan as adopted by Vancouver City Council on October 31, 2012

New Westminster⁴, Delta⁵, and Surrey⁶ have similar sentiments in their plans and Coquitlam’s⁷ is officially expected to be approved later this year.

2 – MODEL AFTER (OR EXPAND) THE DISTRACTED DRIVER’S PROGRAM TO ENFORCE THE PEDESTRIAN’S RIGHT OF WAY

Our examination of road safety from the pedestrian’s perspective found, for the second time, that the top disparity in awareness of road safety practices is that of how close cars should get to pedestrians when passing them.

In response to the many frightening experiences that pedestrians reported last year, we suggested that the city enforce the pedestrian’s right of way in intersections as per the Motor Vehicle Act.

⁴ New Westminister. (2024). *Safe Movement of People*. https://www.newwestcity.ca/city_hall/mayor_and_council/strategic-plan/articles/8120.php?status=active
⁵ Delta. (2024.) *Neighbourhood Traffic Management and Crosswalks*. <https://letstalk.delta.ca/crosswalk-improvements>
⁶ City of Surrey. (2024). *About Vision Zero*. <https://www.surrey.ca/services-payments/parking-streets-transportation/vision-zero-surrey/about-vision-zero>
⁷ Parachute. (2023). *Coquitlam, BC*. <https://parachute.ca/en/location/coquitlam-bc/>

We are pleased that as of June 3rd this year, changes to provincial legislation set “a new minimum distance of one meter that drivers must maintain when passing cyclists and other vulnerable road users and that mobility devices are extensions of the people who are protected by the Motor Vehicle Act”⁸.

After hearing about the successful joint operation that the RCMP led to conduct distracted driving enforcement this March, laying over 100 charges in one month, we would like to see the issue of drivers passing pedestrians too closely addressed with a similar initiative, if even on a much smaller scale.

We have proven that the low-income network is predominately pedestrians. We have heard their concerns two years in a row that the rights to space and way are being disregarded in shared road spaces, so enforcing the amendments to the motor vehicle law would enhance safety and cooperation and the level of satisfaction that pedestrians experience in their position of lesser power. These are the distinct needs that our network has confirmed.

Conclusion

The 2nd phase of the RPRC’s RASC project, Inquiry into Improving Pedestrian Safety in Richmond through Vision Zero Strategies promotes collaboration and consultation around the effects of poverty on our transportation system and has shown that there is an opportunity for Richmond to strengthen a commitment to equity, by defining goals and taking action.

By fostering understanding and further collaboration, Richmond communities can strive towards safer and more harmonious road environments for all residents.

⁸ British Columbia. (2024). *New rules will protect vulnerable road users.*
<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2024MOTI0046-000476>

Appendix A

From the BC Motor Act⁹:

Green light

127 (1) When a green light alone is exhibited at an intersection by a traffic control signal,

(a) the driver of a vehicle facing the green light

(i) may cause the vehicle to proceed straight through the intersection, or to turn left or right, subject to a sign or signal prohibiting a left or right turn, or both, or designating the turning movement permitted,

(ii) must yield the right of way to pedestrians lawfully in the intersection or in an adjacent crosswalk at the time the green light is exhibited, and

(iii) must yield the right of way to vehicles lawfully in the intersection at the time the green light became exhibited, and

(b) a pedestrian facing the green light may proceed across the roadway in a marked or unmarked crosswalk, subject to special pedestrian traffic control signals directing the pedestrian otherwise, and has the right of way for that purpose over all vehicles.

(2) When a green light alone is exhibited at a place other than an intersection by a traffic control signal,

(a) the driver of a vehicle

(i) may cause the vehicle to pass the signal, and

(ii) must yield the right of way to a pedestrian still in the roadway or on a crosswalk in the vicinity of the signal when the green light is exhibited,

(b) a pedestrian still in the roadway or on a crosswalk in the vicinity of the signal when the green light is exhibited must proceed as quickly as possible from the roadway, and

(c) a pedestrian must not enter the roadway in the vicinity of the signal until either

(i) the traffic control signal facing the vehicular traffic exhibits a red light, or

(ii) a traffic control signal instructs the pedestrian that the pedestrian may cross the roadway.

Yellow light

128 (1) When a yellow light alone is exhibited at an intersection by a traffic control signal, following the exhibition of a green light,

(a) the driver of a vehicle approaching the intersection and facing the yellow light must cause it to stop before entering the marked crosswalk on the near side of the intersection, or if there is no marked crosswalk, before entering the intersection, unless the stop cannot be made in safety,

(b) a pedestrian facing the yellow light must not enter the roadway, and

(c) a pedestrian proceeding across the roadway and facing the yellow light exhibited after the pedestrian entered the roadway

(i) must proceed to the sidewalk as quickly as possible, and

⁹ *Motor Vehicle Act*, BC 1996, C 318. http://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/96318_05

(ii) has the right of way for that purpose over all vehicles.

(2) When a yellow light alone is exhibited at a place other than an intersection by a traffic control signal,

(a) the driver of a vehicle approaching the signal must cause it to stop before entering the nearest marked crosswalk in the vicinity of the signal, or if there is no marked crosswalk, before reaching the signal, unless the stop cannot be made in safety, and

(b) a pedestrian must not enter the roadway in the vicinity of the signal until either

(i) the traffic control signal facing the vehicular traffic exhibits a red light, or

(ii) a traffic control signal instructs the pedestrian that the pedestrian may cross the roadway.

Red light

129 (1) Subject to subsection (2), when a red light alone is exhibited at an intersection by a traffic control signal, the driver of a vehicle approaching the intersection and facing the red light must cause it to stop before entering the marked crosswalk on the near side of the intersection, or if there is no marked crosswalk, before entering the intersection, and subject to the provisions of subsection (3), must not cause the vehicle to proceed until a traffic control signal instructs the driver that the driver is permitted to do so.

(2) The driver of a bus approaching an intersection and facing a red light and a prescribed white rectangular indicator may cause the bus to proceed through the intersection.

(3) Despite subsection (1), and except when a right turn permitted by this subsection is prohibited by a sign at an intersection, the driver of a vehicle facing the red light, and which in obedience to it is stopped as closely as practicable to a marked crosswalk on the near side of the intersection, or if there is no marked crosswalk, as closely as practicable to the intersection, may cause the vehicle to make a right turn, but the driver must yield the right of way to all pedestrians and vehicles lawfully proceeding as directed by the signal at the intersection.

(4) When a red light alone is exhibited at an intersection by a traffic control signal,

(a) a pedestrian facing the red light must not enter the roadway unless instructed that the pedestrian may do so by a pedestrian traffic control signal,

(b) except when a left turn permitted by this paragraph is prohibited by a sign at the intersection, the driver of a vehicle facing the red light at the intersection of not more than 2 highways, and which in obedience to it is stopped as closely as practicable to a marked crosswalk on the near side of the intersection, or if there is no marked crosswalk, as closely as practicable to the intersection, may cause the vehicle to make a left turn into a highway on which traffic is restricted to the direction in which the driver causes the vehicle to turn, but the driver must yield the right of way to all pedestrians and vehicles lawfully proceeding as directed by the signal at the intersection, and

(c) a pedestrian proceeding across the roadway and facing the red light exhibited after the pedestrian entered the roadway

(i) must proceed to the sidewalk as quickly as possible, and

(ii) has the right of way for that purpose over all vehicles.

(5) When a red light is exhibited at a place other than an intersection by a traffic control signal,

(a) the driver of a vehicle approaching the signal must cause it to stop before entering the nearest marked crosswalk in the vicinity of the signal, or if there is no marked crosswalk, before reaching the signal, and

(b) a pedestrian may proceed across the roadway.



2024

