

# Government of the District of Columbia

## Department of Transportation



### **d.** Office of the Director

October 27, 2015

Gregory Billing  
Executive Director  
Washington Area Bicyclist Association  
2599 Ontario Rd, NW  
Washington, DC 20009

### **Re: Modernizing the Collection and Disclosure of Traffic Crash Data in the District of Columbia as a Key First Step in the Vision Zero Initiative**

Dear Mr. Billing:

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) would like to thank the Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA) for your thoughtful recommendations regarding traffic safety data in the District. Since February 2015, we have received similar suggestions from advocacy organizations, advisory groups and residents during Vision Zero planning activities throughout the District. The Mayor's Vision Zero legislative agenda released last month reflects this valuable feedback, and the Action Plan to be released this fall will add to the established foundation. In response to the specific themes raised in the July 14, 2015 letter, DDOT is pleased to share the following information on behalf of Vision Zero agencies:

#### **Modernizing the Collection of Data**

The Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) is currently migrating to its new Records Management System. The new system will meet Model Minimum Uniform Crash Criteria requirements by including the contributing factors that are related to crashes involving people walking, biking, and driving. The Vision Zero action plan will focus heavily on enhancing data systems and evaluation.

Our efforts are aided by the work of the work of the Traffic Records Coordinating Committee (TRCC), which aims to produce timelier, accurate, complete, integrated, uniform, and accessible traffic records data. Since 2007, this multi-agency group has convened policy-level representatives from each major data system owner (crash, roadway, enforcement/adjudication, driver, vehicle, injury surveillance system/emergency medical system) to improve data quality. A specific strategy in the Vision Zero action plan is to accelerate the work of the TRCC. The TRCC's Traffic Records Strategic Plan will guide this Vision Zero strategy. The 2014 version of the plan is enclosed.

### **The Integration of Crash Data**

With regard to the integration of crash data with medical data, the TRCC also prioritizes the development of a robust Injury Surveillance Information System. This system provides pre-hospital data collection managed by Fire and Emergency Medical Services (FEMS) and vital records data managed by the Vital Records Division within the Department of Health (DOH).

In order to enhance this system, the TRCC aims to develop and augment centralized electronic hospital discharge data. Data system owners will develop applications to allow FEMS to send preliminary information regarding patient condition to the hospital, and allow the public to notify FEMS of traffic crashes. This goal will achieve capability on par with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) Crash Outcome Data Evaluation System codes.

### **Disclosure of Traffic Data**

DDOT agrees that the District's crash data must be as transparent and open as possible, keeping in mind that personal information and other sensitive data involved in open criminal investigations cannot be shared publicly. While DDOT does publish aggregate crash data and analysis, the data is not downloadable in machine-readable format, and is not officially reported in a timely fashion. Similar to the New York City Vision Zero effort, DC agencies have already begun a shift toward providing more open safety data, in an easy to read, downloadable format.

### **Vision Zero Data Collection**

After crowdsourcing resident-reported concerns about dangerous behavior and potentially hazardous locations, DDOT and the Office of the Chief Technology Officer (OCTO) published this data at [opendata.dc.gov](http://opendata.dc.gov). There, users can download raw data in multiple formats to perform their own analysis of the more than 4,000 reports recorded. The Vision Zero action plan will call for more open data of this kind. This data will illustrate the location and character of crash, citation, engineering, and infrastructure data.

### **Additional Vision Zero Data Strategies**

In addition to the items above, the Vision Zero initiative has identified the following strategies to enhance the quality, availability, and value of the District's transportation safety data for all stakeholders. The final set of strategies will be published this fall in the Vision Zero Action Plan:

- Publish geo-spatial analysis of safety-related citations issued and adjudicated. Hold quarterly safety meetings to refine enforcement strategies based on safety outcomes.
- Compile and analyze pedestrian, bicycle, vehicle safety and injury data at all DC Public Schools and DC Public Charter School locations.
- Form a Safety Review Task Force to evaluate the engineering of the infrastructure of the roads which had fatal and severe injury crashes in order to take a proactive approach to safety through identifying aspects which may affect responsiveness. This Task Force would also review safety-related data as part of crash evaluations.

We agree that by allowing increased public access and transparency in crash data only serves to improve the quality of the data and thereby increase its utility for our agency to conduct more efficient, data-based studies that assist us in resolving issues in bicyclist safety across the District.

Letter to Gregory Billing  
October 20, 2015  
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Thank you, again, for your letter. If you have any further questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact Sam Zimbabwe, Associate Director for Planning for DDOT, at (202) 671-2542, or [sam.zimbabwe@dc.gov](mailto:sam.zimbabwe@dc.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Leif Dormsjo".

Leif Dormsjo  
Director

cc: Sam Zimbabwe, Associate Director, DDOT  
Jonathan M. Rogers, Vision Zero Program Manager, DDOT

Enclosure: *District of Columbia Traffic Records Strategic Plan (November 2014)*