

**To the leadership of the St. Louis region:**

We are angry. We are hurting. We are scared.

We have lived with violence on our streets caused by reckless drivers for years. People are killed trying to get across the street. Children are maimed while playing in their own neighborhood. Countless lives are impacted because our streets are dangerous.

In the last few weeks, fatal hit-and-run crashes have torn through communities and families. But these deaths are only the tip of the iceberg of how traffic violence impacts the lives of residents of St. Louis. St. Louis is an outlier in the Midwest and across the country. In 2021 the city of Indianapolis saw 3.7 fatalities of people walking per 100,000 residents<sup>1</sup>, while the city of St. Louis saw 6.8 fatalities of people walking per 100,000 residents<sup>2</sup>. In 2020, one of the worst years on record for traffic violence across the United States, the city of Chicago saw 797 deaths and injuries in all modes of transportation per 100,000 residents<sup>3</sup>, while in St. Louis City the rate was more than double this, at 1,933 per 100,000 residents<sup>4</sup>. In the 10 years from 2012 to 2021, we estimate that the 570 deaths in St. Louis City<sup>5</sup> due to traffic violence had an economic impact of \$997.5 million dollars<sup>6</sup>. This does not include the injuries (over 2,408 injuries to people walking from 2012 to 2021) and the heavy toll that witnessing and responding to these crashes takes on bystanders. And this violence disproportionately impacts Black neighborhoods and people. According to Trailnet, 74% of all pedestrian fatalities, 64% of fatal car crashes, and 47% of all pedestrian crashes occurred in neighborhoods that are predominately Black<sup>7</sup>.

**We are writing to you now because we do not have time to wait.** St. Louis must have a comprehensive, multi-systemic approach to addressing this problem. Other cities have committed to creating safer streets and have seen significant success, including the total elimination of traffic fatalities and serious injuries. St. Louis must be next.

We want to see a cohesive, organized effort to address these problems through strategies like [Vision Zero](#). A Vision Zero approach acknowledges the [proven fact](#) that all traffic deaths and serious injuries are preventable, our infrastructure should be forgiving of human failure, we can prevent fatal and severe crashes, and we can do this affordably.

We request that:

- All recipients of this letter publicly acknowledge the pressing problem of traffic violence in St. Louis.
- The Mayor and the Board of Aldermen, in partnership with leadership at MODOT, Bi-State, and our state representatives, immediately announce a commitment to creating, funding, and implementing a plan to eliminate traffic deaths.
  - This strategy must address the five factors outlined in the Safe Systems approach recently recommended by the Federal Highway Administration under the National Roadway Safety Strategy<sup>8</sup> (safe vehicles, safe road users, safe streets, safe speeds, and strong post-crash care).

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<sup>1</sup>["Indianapolis' fatal crash problem is worsening. Here are 4 takeaways and what's to be done."](#) IndyStar, 5.2.2022.

<sup>2</sup> [2021 St. Louis City & County Crash Report](#), Trailnet.

<sup>3</sup> [IDOT City Summary Crash Report](#), 12.30.2020.

<sup>4</sup> [2020 City of St. Louis Crash Report](#), Trailnet. 1.28.2021.

<sup>5</sup> [Missouri State Highway Patrol](#). 2012-2021

<sup>6</sup> [National Safety Council Injury Facts](#).

<sup>7</sup> [2020 City of St. Louis Crash Report](#), Trailnet. 1.28.2021.

<sup>8</sup> [Making our Roads Safer through a Safe System Approach](#), US DOT Federal Highway Administration. Winter 2022.

- A specific individual or team must be tasked with developing a comprehensive Vision Zero strategy, with a clear deadline and active resident participation. We offer CMC members to participate in this effort.
- We expect this strategy will include improvements to infrastructure, changes to policy, and consideration of a range of enforcement methods.
- The strategy must take into account racial equity and carefully consider how interventions will impact various groups and individuals.
- This strategy must be publicly shared and widely distributed, so residents may hold the city accountable to these changes.
- The strategy must address the full transportation network in the St. Louis region, including state-owned and state-managed corridors including the highway network, on- and off-ramps, and major corridors such as Riverview, Natural Bridge, Page, Manchester, and Gravois.
- City officials commit to pursuing all available funding opportunities for creating safer streets, including federal funding.
- Local and regional leaders partner with our state elected officials to change state laws on distracted driving, drivers education requirements, restrictions on automated enforcement, and other vehicle-related policies that allow dangerous drivers to continue to operate without systemic changes to prevent future traffic violence.
- The Board of Public Service and the Streets Department are empowered to immediately install temporary physical interventions at the sites of multiple fatal and catastrophic crashes with physical interventions and traffic calming, even if the first intervention is temporary until larger-scale change can be implemented. On city-maintained roads, this must include Grand between Delmar and Natural Bridge, Chippewa between Jamieson and Ivanhoe, Grand between Flad and Forest Park Parkway, Union between Page and Natural Bridge.
- Local and regional leaders allocate funding, offer support, and acknowledge the families and communities impacted by traffic violence, and in particular recognizing the pain of unsolved and unaddressed traffic violence.
- Local media improves and expands attentive, caring, and appropriate coverage of these incidents, utilizing the best practices outlined in the [Traffic Violence Toolkit](#), including putting incidents in context, using people-first language, and avoiding counterfactuals.

The Community Mobility Committee looks forward to partnering with City staff and leadership from across the region that we desperately need. We look forward to hearing back from you and being involved in this critical change.

Sincerely,

*Voting Members of the Community Mobility Committee:*

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[Learn more about the Community Mobility Committee](#)

CC:

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Betherny Williams, Director of Streets  
Dr. Daniel Isom, Director of Public Safety  
Jamie Wilson, Commissioner of Traffic  
Colonel Michael J. Sack, SLMPD Commissioner  
Lt. Paul A. Lauer, Command over traffic division  
Grace Kyung, Senior Strategic Initiatives Manager  
Scott Ogilvie, Program Manager, Complete Streets, Planning and Urban Design Agency  
Rich Bradley, PE, President of the Board of Public Service  
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Patrick McKenna, Director, Missouri Department of Transportation  
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Taulby Roach, President & CEO of Bi-State Development  
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