A wide-angle photograph of a city street in Seattle. The street is lined with mature trees, some with fresh green leaves. A dark blue SUV is driving towards the camera in the center lane. On the left, a silver car is partially visible. Pedestrians are walking across the street at a crosswalk. On the right, there's a bus stop shelter and a small sign that says "Look Out For Each Other" with icons of a person, a car, and a dog. The sky is clear and blue.

Vision Zero update

Moving toward a healthy, equitable, sustainable Seattle

Levy Oversight Committee

Presented by Allison Schwartz, Vision Zero Program Coordinator

September 7, 2021 | Seattle Department of Transportation



City of Seattle

Moment of silence

Since City launched Vision Zero 6 years ago

- **155 people have been killed** in traffic crashes
- More than **1,000 serious injury crashes**

Together, we affirm our support for safe and racially equitable streets. We acknowledge our commitment to end serious injuries and fatalities on our streets.



Presentation overview, key takeaways

- Street design matters and can advance safety, racial equity, and climate action goals
- We are not getting closer to ending traffic deaths and serious injuries
- We can get there by using proven solutions and reducing reliance on strategies that aren't advancing goals



Same system, same outcomes

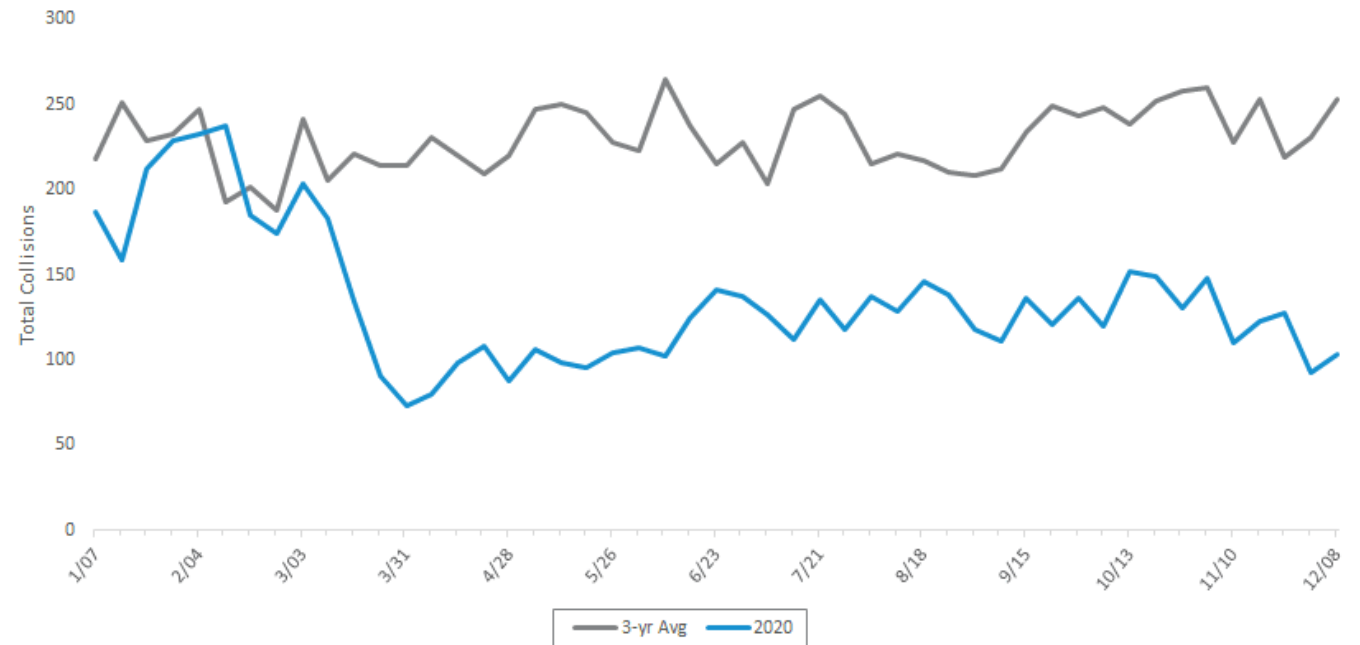
In a “normal” year, we see:

- 12,000 crashes
- 20 traffic deaths
- 160 serious injury crashes

In 2020, we saw:

- 7,100 total crashes
- 25 traffic deaths (prelim data)
- 144 serious injury crashes

Total collisions by week (2020 vs previous 3-yr avg)



The importance of safe street design

Many of our streets were designed to prioritize the fast movement of vehicles.

- 50% of fatal and serious injury crashes occur on 11% of street network
- Multi-lane, high speed, high volume arterials
- Since we launched Vision Zero:
 - Aurora Ave: 21 deaths, 49 serious injuries
 - Rainier Ave S: 5 deaths, 60 serious injuries
 - MLK Jr Way S: 10 deaths, 35 serious injuries
 - Lake City Way: 5 deaths, 23 serious injuries



People traveling on Rainier Ave S at Martin Luther King Jr Way S

Contributing factors to crashes

Street design is a key factor that influences behavior

Year over year, consistent contributing factors (human behavior):

- **Speed**
- **Impairment**
- **Distraction**
- **Failure to yield to pedestrian**

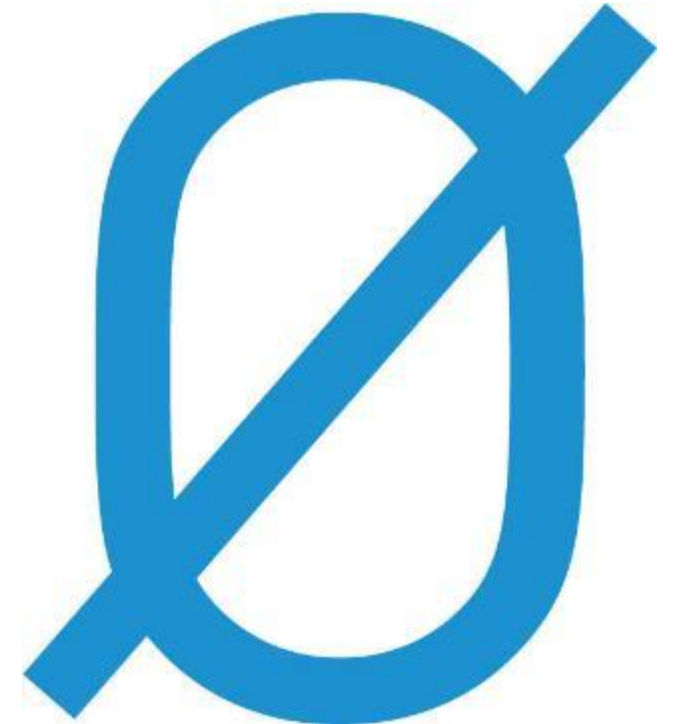
Hit and run crashes are increasing. This makes it hard to determine what happened/led to a crash and whether the person who fled was impaired.

	Hit & Run	Total Fatalities	%
2017	3	21	14%
2018	2	14	14%
2019	8	26	31%
2020	7	24	29%

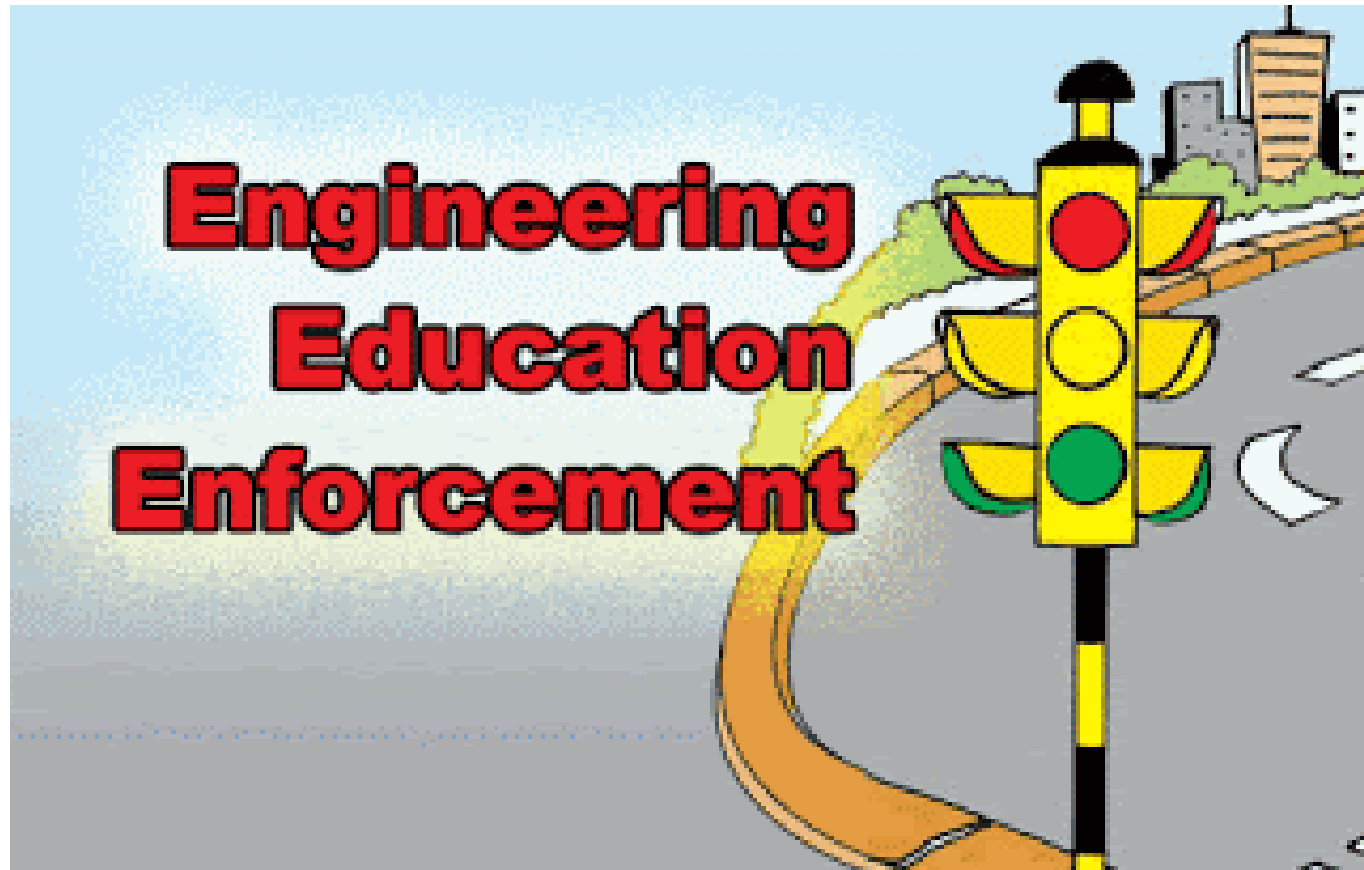
Vision Zero principles

- Traffic deaths are preventable (they are not “accidents”)
- Success does not hinge on individual actions, but on designing a safe system of self-enforcing streets
- Account for human imperfection

In Seattle, our goal is to end traffic deaths and serious injuries on city streets by 2030.

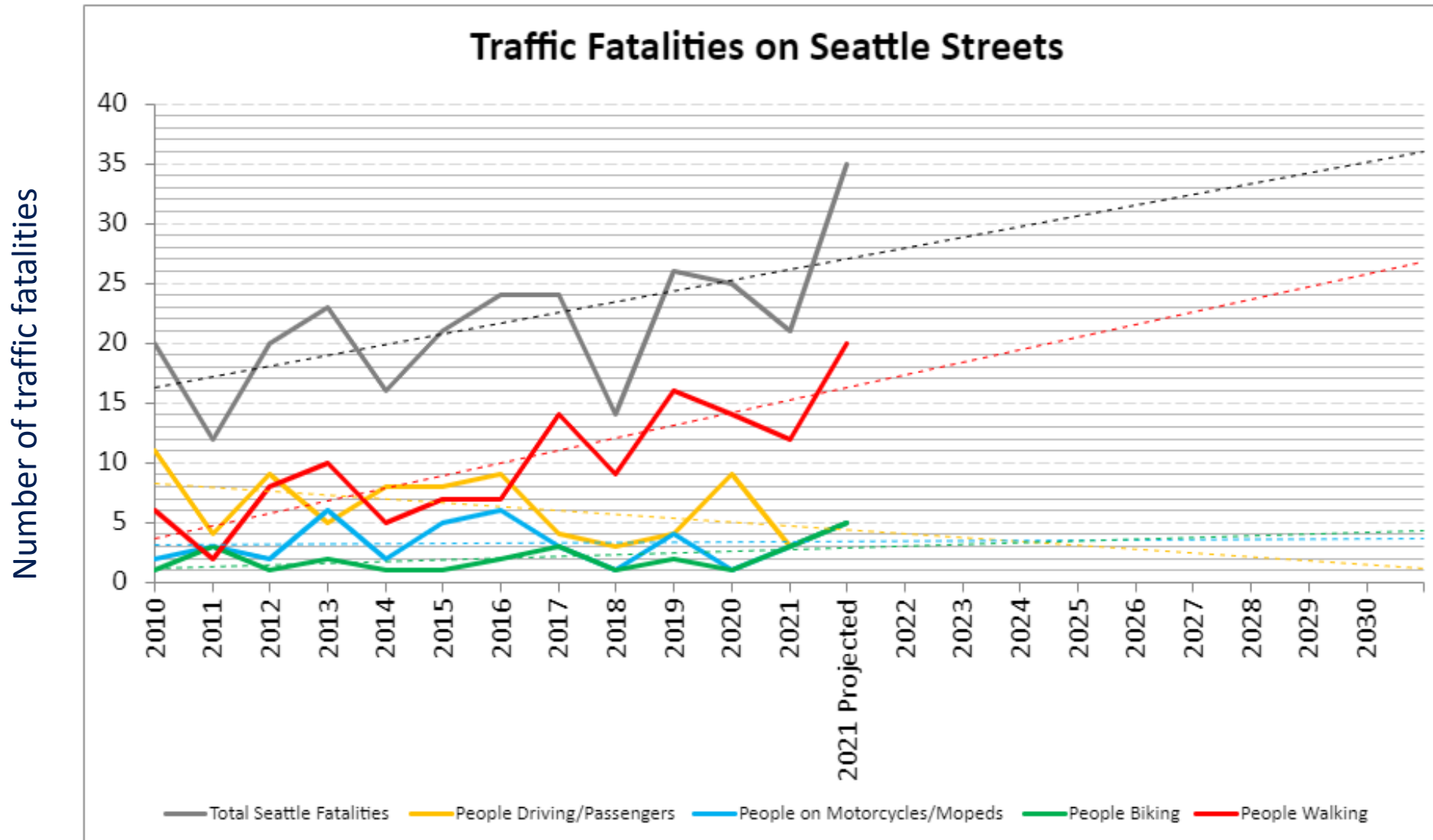


Traditional approach to traffic safety



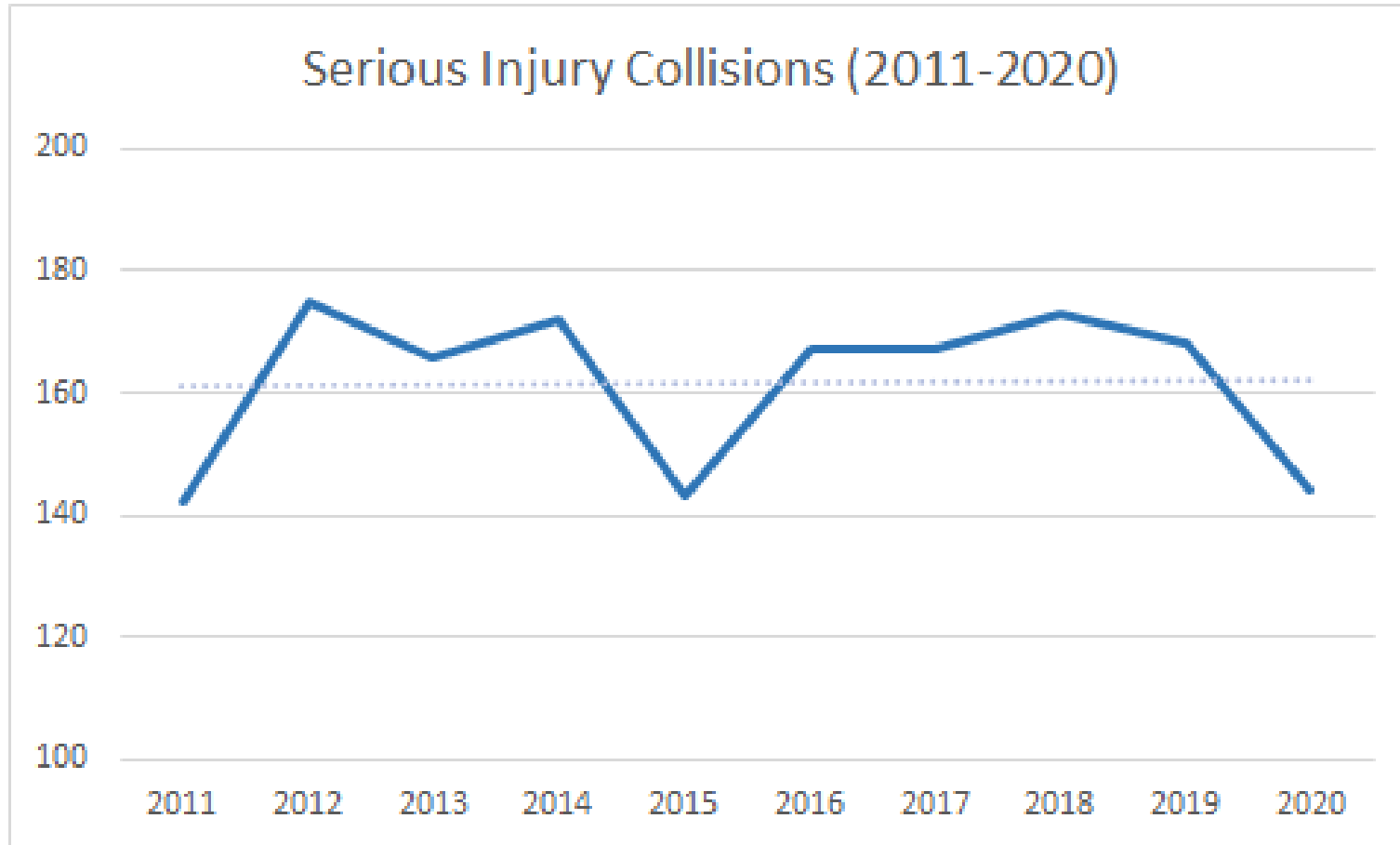
Where has this gotten us?

Closer to ending traffic deaths?



Overall traffic deaths increasing due to increasing rate of deaths of people walking, while trendline for fatalities involving people in vehicles is decreasing.

Closer to ending serious injuries?



Looking at data from one year alone can obscure the bigger picture.

Despite a reduction in 2020, on average, we see 160 serious injury crashes a year.

Protecting the most vulnerable travelers?



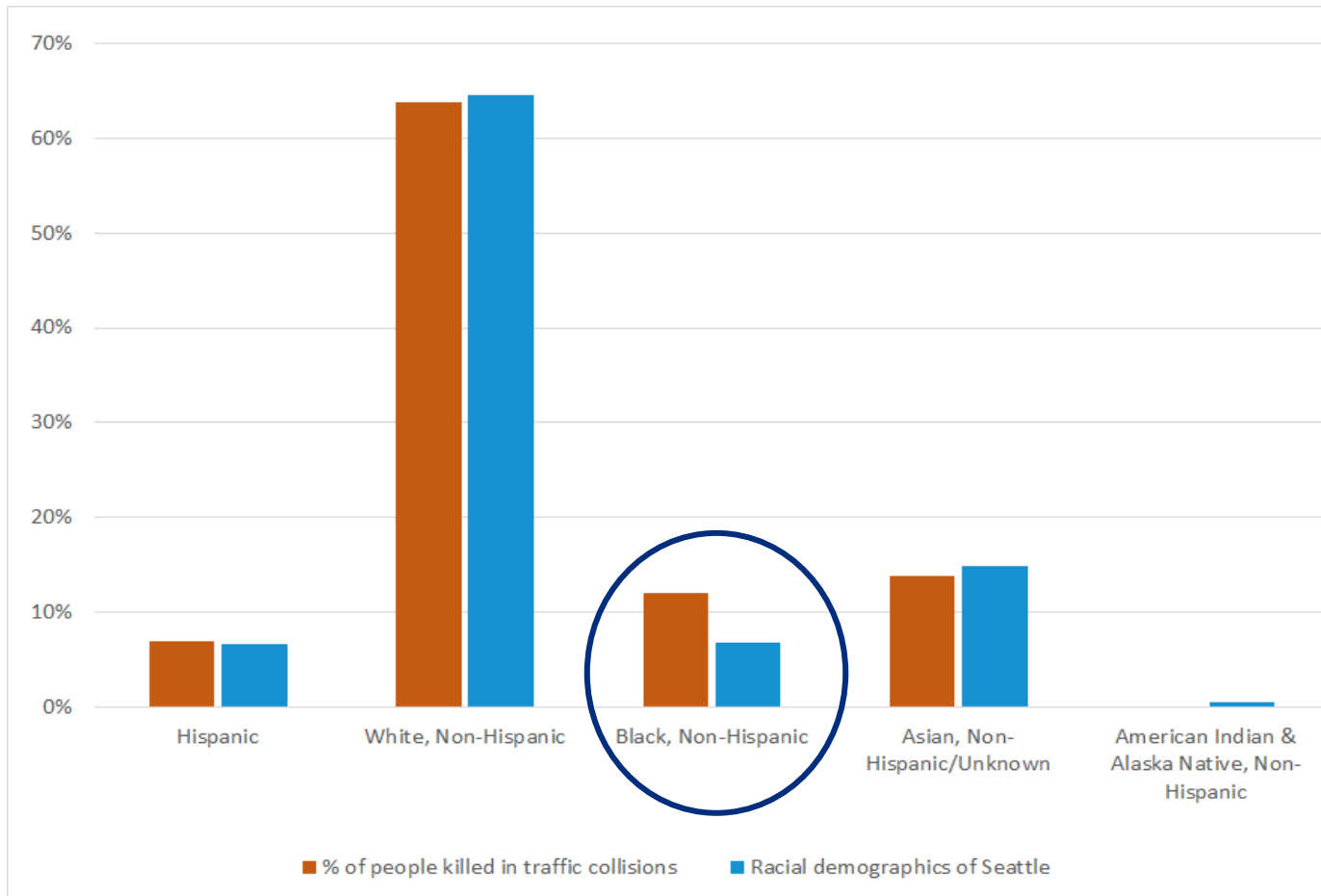
- People walking and biking (2018 – 2020): 7% of total crashes, but 66% of fatalities
- Average age of people walking who have died: 56 years old



- ~20% of people walking who have been killed also likely unhoused/experiencing homelessness

Closer to achieving racial equity?

Fatal collisions and race, 2015-2018

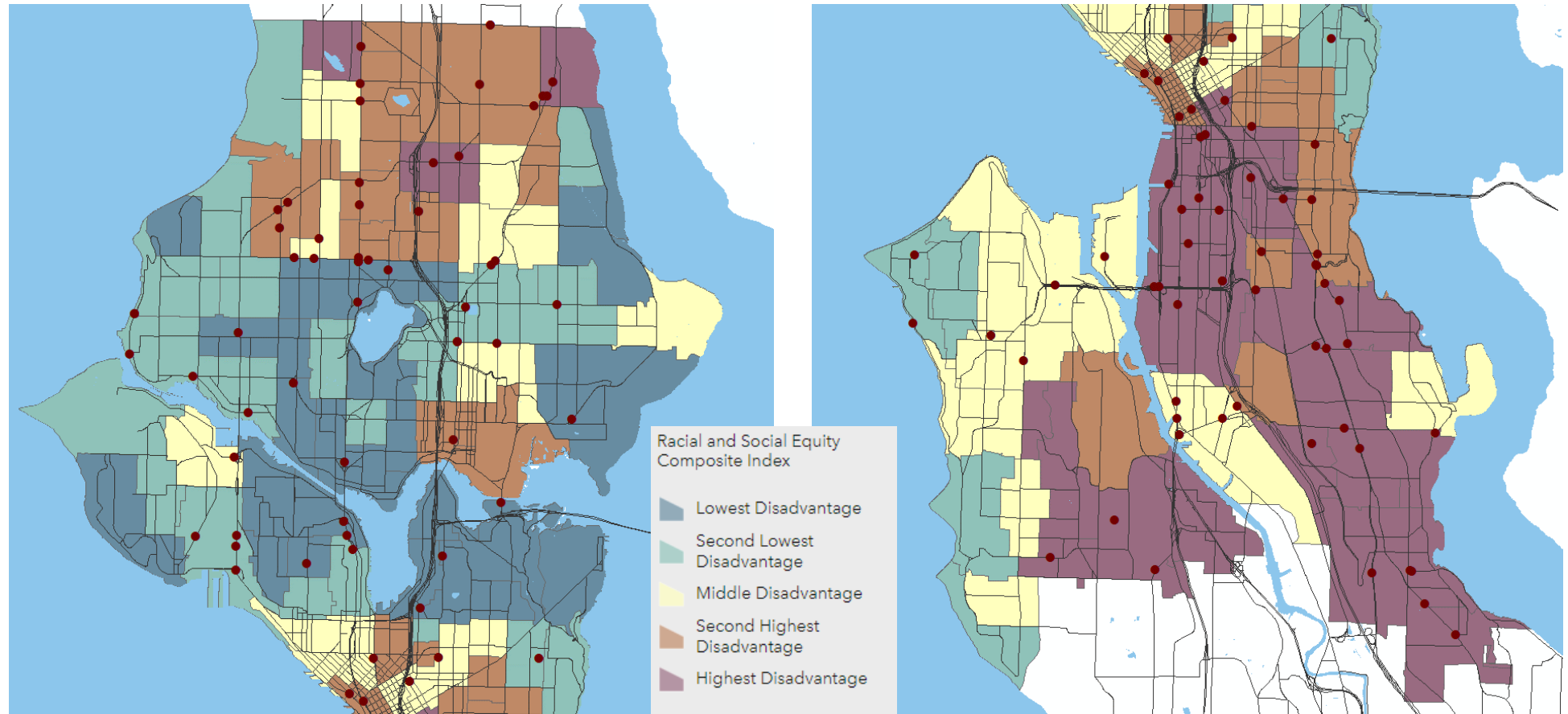


7% of Seattle population identifies as Black, but Black people make up 12% of those killed in collisions on city streets.

Highly disadvantaged communities are more affected

In the past 5 years, 31% of traffic deaths were in the 20% of Census Tracts that make up the most highly disadvantaged communities.

Traffic deaths: ●



Racial disparities in traffic enforcement fines and fees

2020 study commissioned by Seattle Office for Civil Rights:

- Analyzed 17 years of Seattle Municipal Court cases involving legal financial obligations (fines, fees, and other related costs imposed by court)
- 83% were traffic infractions
- In 2017, Black drivers in Seattle were issued 2.6 times more traffic infractions with legal financial obligations per capita than were White drivers

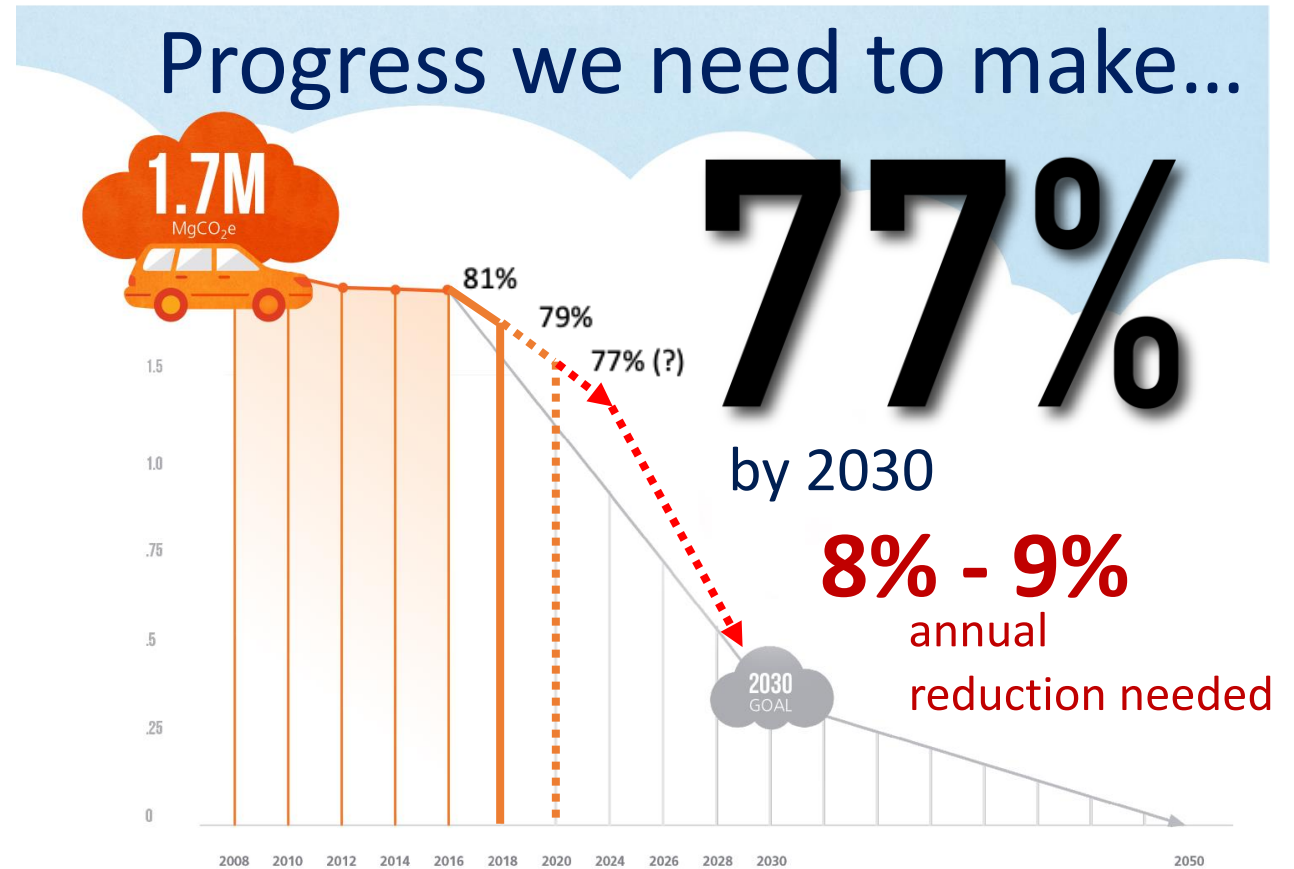
Sources:

[An Analysis of Court Imposed Monetary Sanctions in Seattle Municipal Courts, 2000-2017](#)

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-08-11/seattle-fines-and-fees-hit-black-residents-harder>

Closer to achieving our climate goals?

To meet Seattle's climate *and* safety goals, we must redesign our roads to encourage and support more transit, walking, biking, and slower speeds so we can reduce reliance on single occupancy vehicles.



Let's do more of what works.

Slowing down to save lives

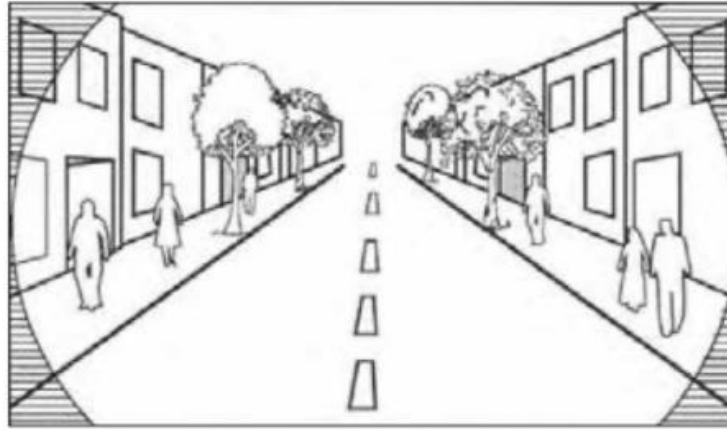
- 90+% of Seattle arterials are 25 MPH; all non-arterials are 20 MPH
- Partnering with WSDOT on state-owned arterials
- Lowering citywide speed limits, initial findings:
 - 20% decrease in injury crashes
 - 54% decrease top-end speeders



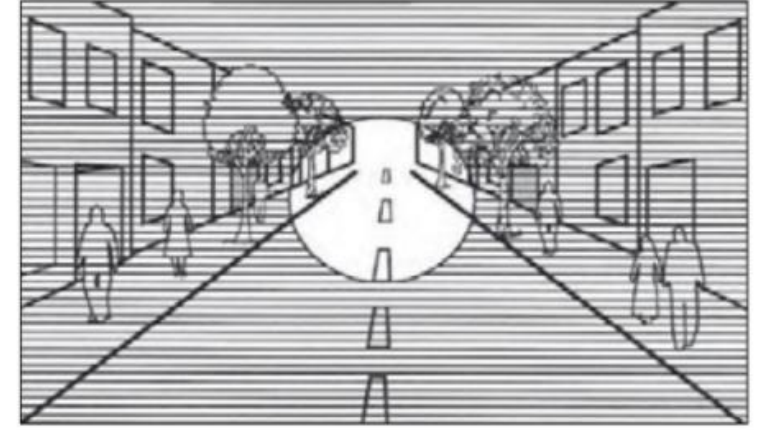
Why speed matters

How fast you travel affects how much you can see, how quickly you can stop, and how severe a crash will be if you get in one.

A difference of 5 miles per hour can mean the difference between life and death.




Field of vision at 15 MPH



Field of vision at 30 to 40 MPH

HIT BY A VEHICLE
TRAVELING AT:

**20
MPH**



9 out of 10 pedestrians survive

HIT BY A VEHICLE
TRAVELING AT:


**30
MPH**



5 out of 10 pedestrians survive

HIT BY A VEHICLE
TRAVELING AT:

**40
MPH**



Only 1 out of 10 pedestrians survives

Giving pedestrians a head start

- 30% of signalized intersections now have pedestrian head starts
- Surpassed 2020 goal (installed 300+); 60 more in 2021
- Reduction in turning collisions with people walking
 - 50% reduction for all injuries
 - 35% reduction in serious/fatal collisions



Redesigning streets

- Complete streets approach
- Use street design to manage speeds, reduce collisions, improve crossings
- Enhanced safety for all travelers
- Provides opportunities to repurpose space for more efficient uses

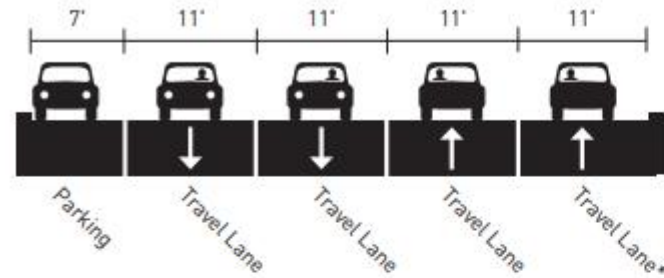
Street	ADT Before	ADT Change	Injury Collisions	Aggressive Speeding (40+ MPH)
Stone Way N	13,900	-6%	-33%	-75%
S Columbian Way	12,300	+15%	-19%	-46%
Nickerson Street	18,500	-1%	-20%	-93%
NE 125 th Street	13,600	+11%	-8%	-69%
N 130 th Street	13,298	+0.5%	-75%	-87%
Ellis Avenue S	9,855	-39%	-24%	-30%
Rainier Ave S (Phase 1)	21,600	-27%	-30%	-77%
NE 65 th St	14,390	+3%	-54%	-42%

Before and after data for street redesigns in Seattle (ADT = average daily traffic)

Redesigning streets: Rainier Ave S

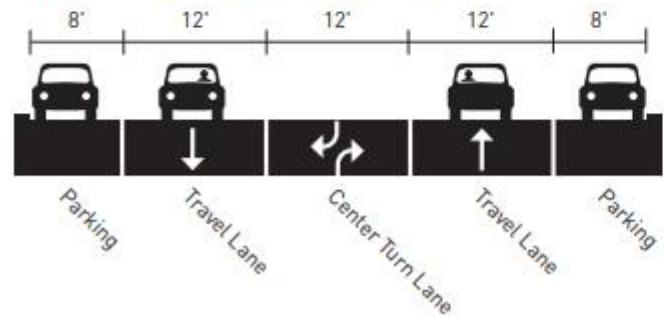
- 2015: Phase 1, Columbia City and Hillman City
 - Injury collisions down 30%
 - Collisions with people walking and biking down 40%
 - Top-end speeding down ~75%
- 2020: Phase 2, Hillman City to Rainier Beach
 - Evaluation report early 2022
- *Starting soon*: Phase 3, Rainier Beach

TYPICAL CROSS SECTION (EXISTING)



*Parking available at some locations

TYPICAL CROSS SECTION (NEW)



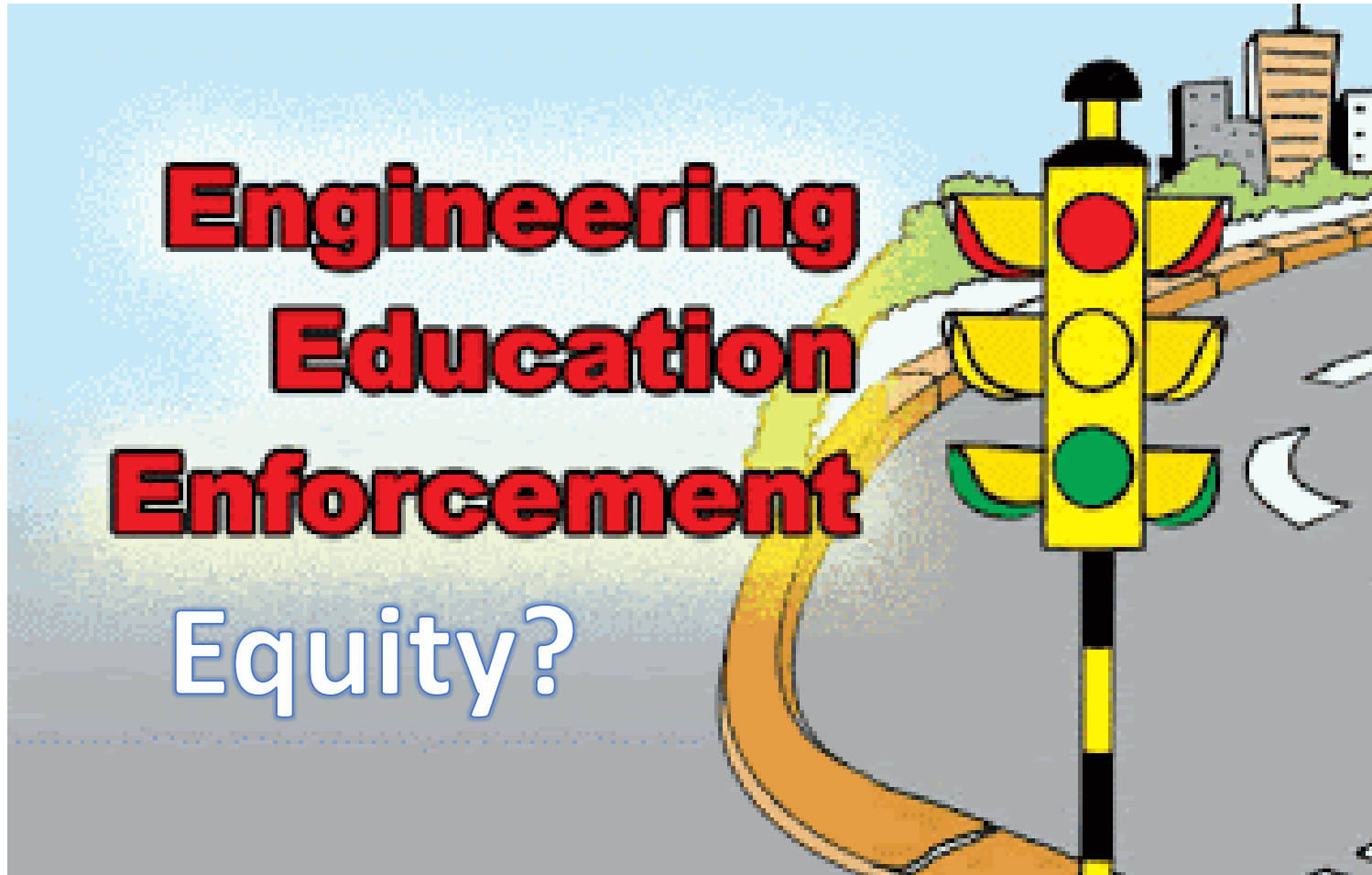
BEFORE



AFTER

Where would we like to go?

Examining the traditional approach to traffic safety



What have the consequences (intended and unintended) been?

Is this approach advancing Seattle's safety *and* racial equity goals?

How effective is each E?

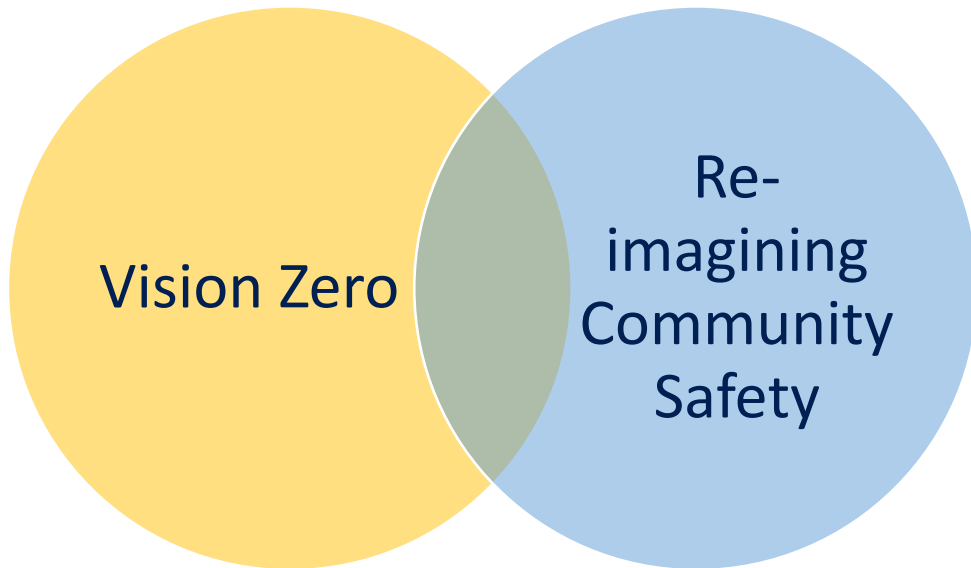
Vision Zero and enforcement

- Re-imagining community safety: evaluating our approach with a racial equity framework
- Racial Equity Toolkit: automated enforcement (red light, school safety cameras)
- Active coordination with SPD



Move toward *self-enforcing* street design

Grounding this work in racial equity



We are learning more about

Disproportionate harm to Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) community members that has occurred by way of the traditional approach we've leaned on for traffic safety

Thinking about safety more holistically

It's not just about being protected from harm of traffic crashes

And hoping to move toward

A new approach that can help us make progress on multiple city goals

Partner highlight: East African Community Services

- New partnership focused on BIPOC youth engagement, youth-led traffic safety education campaign development, active transportation
- Collaboration between Vision Zero, Safe Routes to School, Transit + Mobility teams
- Began with bike giveaway and helmet distribution to 100 East African youth served by EACS (bikes donated by Superpedestrian)



Key challenges and opportunities

- Funding constraints
- Do more of what's proven to work (less of what isn't)
- **It's possible.** Connection between safer streets, climate action, affordability, racial equity

Anders Hartmann @andershartmann · Jan 1, 2020
This makes me happy:

Road deaths in Oslo (pop. 673.000) in 2019:
Pedestrians: 0
Cyclists: 0
Children: 0

The graph shows the reduction of road deaths since 1975.

Article in Norwegian: aftenposten.no/osloby/i/dO0rz...

#VisionZero

Year	Road Deaths
1975	25
1980	22
1985	25
1990	18
1995	14
2000	16
2001	6
2002	15
2003	11
2004	11
2005	6
2006	4
2007	3
2008	10
2009	8
2010	6
2011	8
2012	7
2013	4
2014	5
2015	3
2016	4
2017	2
2018	3
2019	1

90 2.8K 5K 1

Questions?

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www.seattle.gov/visionzero

