# SAFE BY DESIGN

## Moving Toward a Transportation Network Built for People


MAY 2026

PlanRVA

Where the region comes together to look ahead.

**THIS PLAN IS DEDICATED TO THE 490 PEOPLE IN OUR REGION WHO WERE KILLED AND 3,579 PEOPLE WHO EXPERIENCED A LIFE-ALTERING INJURY SINCE THE LAST REGIONAL SAFETY PLAN WAS ADOPTED IN FEBRUARY 2022.**

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

**Traffic deaths and serious injuries are not random events.**

Most severe roadway harm happens on a small share of streets.

**Speed is the strongest predictor of whether a crash results in death or serious injury.**

Physical design influences behavior more reliably than signs, slogans, or rules alone.

**People will make mistakes. A safe transportation system should anticipate that reality.**

Streets must be designed for human safety rather than vehicle performance.

**Where roads are wider and speeds higher, the consequences of errors are more severe.**

Pedestrians, cyclists, and people with mobility challenges face the highest risk.

**Safety outcomes reflect choices about design, funding, and priorities—not inevitability.**

Preventing deaths requires changing conditions, not waiting for behavior improvements.

**Data can predict where the next serious crash is likely to occur.**

Emergency response saves lives, but is needed only when all other steps fail.

**Incremental design changes, applied consistently, produce large safety gains.**

A safe system reduces the chance that one mistake becomes a fatal outcome.

**Progress is measured in lives protected, not projects completed.**

This plan exists to create a safer future, not to document our past mistakes.

## ZERO DEATHS ON OUR ROADWAYS ARE POSSIBLE.

PlanRVA

Where the region comes together to look ahead.

# Contents



# Appendices

The appendices for this report are linked here and can be found at planrva.org and the Safety Action Plan project page at engage.planrva.org/safety-plan.

Glossary of Key Terms

Engagement Report

Full Survey Results

Open Ended Comments

High Injury Network Methodology

Priority Safety Corridors

Safer Together: A Regional Messaging Framework for Safer Streets and Communities

# Executive Summary

Since the last regional safety plan was adopted in February 2022, **490 people have been killed** and **3,579 people seriously injured** on roads across the Richmond region. These are not random outcomes. They reflect the design of our streets, the conditions our roads create, individual actions, our culture of safety, and the investments we have (and have not) made. *Safe by Design*, the Richmond Region's safety action plan, is PlanRVA's commitment to change that.

**115,000+**
crashes reported across the region

**24.4%**
of people killed were pedestrians or cyclists

**1%**
of roadways account for 70% of fatal & serious crashes

**2,000+**
residents engaged throughout the safety plan update

The **Safe System Approach** recognizes that roadway deaths and serious injuries are preventable and design and management of transportation systems must anticipate human error, manage speeds, and prioritize vulnerable road users

## WHAT THE REGION TOLD US

### Top Concerns from 1,073 Survey Respondents

- pedestrian safety
- distracted driving
- cyclist safety
- speeding
- crosswalks
- phones

### Consensus from Respondents

"I support safer conditions for people outside a motor vehicle, even if it means my trip might take 2–5 minutes longer." (avg 4.7/5)

## SIX SAFETY ACTIONS

**Action 1**
Create a Regional Street Design Manual

**Action 2**
Develop a Regional Road Safety Assessment Program

**Action 3**
Develop a Regional Quick Build Library

**Action 4**
Implement Quick Build Projects

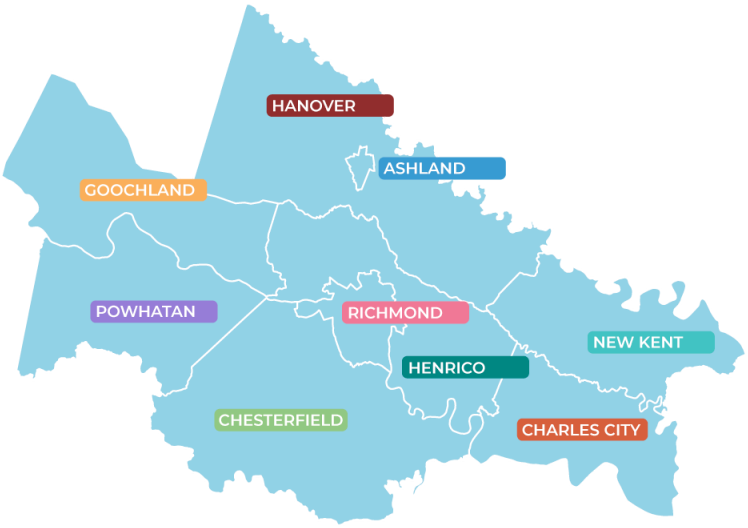
**Action 5**
Advance Complementary Safety Plans

**Action 6**
Track Progress and Keep Safety a Regional Priority

Three of the region's largest jurisdictions (Richmond, Henrico, and Chesterfield) have adopted formal safety action plans since 2022, each grounded in the Safe System Approach. This plan connects those efforts into a unified regional framework, links safety investment to federal funding, and establishes shared tools, data, and accountability structures that no single locality can build alone. Progress will be measured in lives protected and reported publicly every year.

# How We Got Here

PlanRVA, working with its partner jurisdictions, set out to update our regional safety plan to strengthen coordination, align with federal safety priorities, and guide the region toward the goal of eliminating traffic-related deaths and serious injuries. This update builds on the 2022 Richmond Regional Transportation Safety Plan, which set out shared regional priorities and a data-driven framework for identifying high-injury corridors, systemic risks, and equitable safety improvements across the nine localities of the Richmond region.



PlanRVA member jurisdictions

Since that plan's adoption, every jurisdiction in the region has advanced its own local safety priorities. Three have completed a local safety action plan—Henrico's *Arrive Alive* Plan (2025), Chesterfield's *Road Safety Action Plan* (2024), and the City of Richmond's *Vision Zero* Plan (updated in 2023)—each rooted in the Safe System Approach. These plans all emphasize that roadway deaths and serious injuries are preventable and that the design and management of transportation systems must anticipate human error, manage speeds, and prioritize vulnerable road users. The regional update combines these (and other) local priorities into a unified plan to support coordinated investment, shared messaging, and systemic improvements.

> The **Safe System Approach** recognizes that roadway deaths and serious injuries are preventable and design and management of transportation systems must anticipate human error, manage speeds, and prioritize vulnerable road users.

The updated plan over the following pages will refine the Regional High Injury Network (HIN), reassess crash patterns since 2022, and strengthen the connection between safety assessments, public engagement, and implementation. It will also reference new data sources, such as near-miss reporting, and link regional priorities with new funding opportunities. Building on recent investments and ongoing collaboration among regional partners, the plan will reinforce how roadway engineering, design, and data-driven strategy can create safer streets for everyone—whether you are walking, rolling, cycling, driving, or using transit.

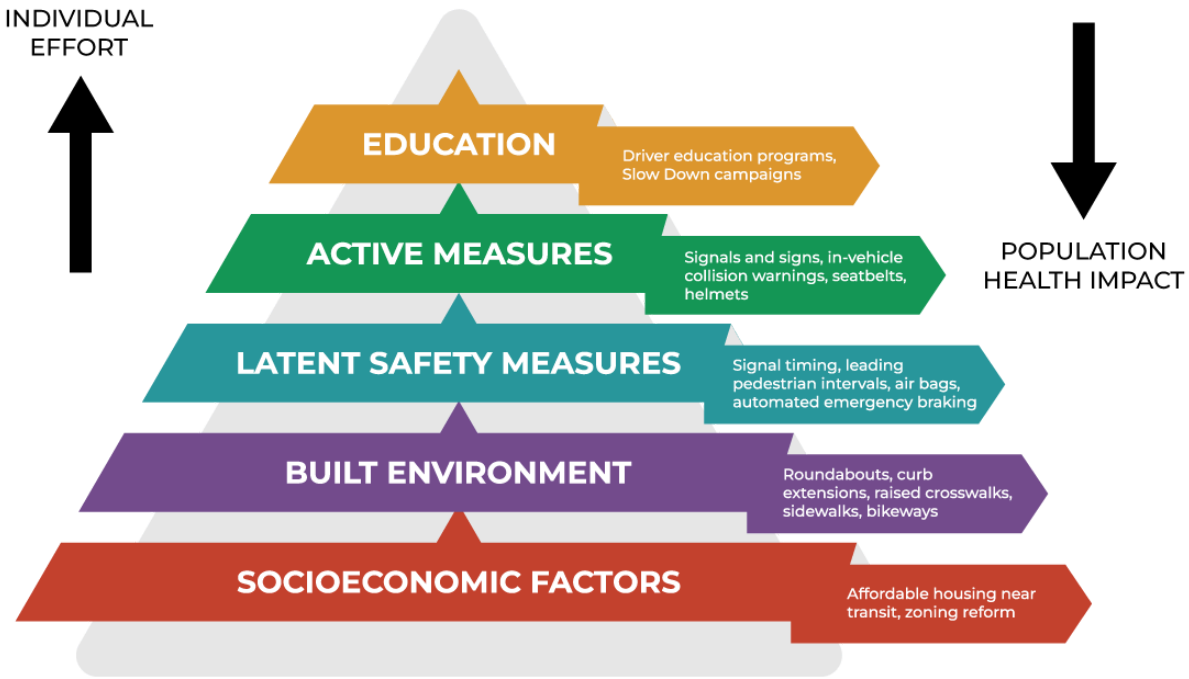
# All Safety Investments are Not Equal

Many of us grew up hearing that crashes happen because people make bad choices on the roadway. That idea shaped decades of transportation safety approaches like more driver's education, stricter enforcement, and public awareness campaigns. And while these things matter, research shows they are not enough on their own.

The truth is that people make mistakes. Every day, on every road. No amount of education or enforcement eliminates human error entirely. When someone makes a mistake, does the design forgive it, or does it turn a lapse of judgment into a tragedy?

## What Helps Guide our Priorities

The Safe System Pyramid illustrates how different types of safety investments compare. The shape is intentional, with the widest layers at the bottom representing strategies that protect the most people with the least reliance on individual behavior. The narrowest layers at the top represent measures that depend heavily on individuals doing the right thing at the right moment. As you move up, individual effort increases and population impact decreases. This concept derives from the Health Impact Pyramid and recognizes that transportation professionals have roles as public health professionals since road crashes are a public health issue.




*Ederer, D.J., et al. (2023). The Safe Systems Pyramid: A new framework for traffic safety. Transportation Research Interdisciplinary Perspectives.*

Socioeconomic factors and the built environment form the base because they shape everyone's safety regardless of an individual's decisions. Education is at the top because it only works when individuals accept it, understand it, and act on it. This framework helps our region direct resources toward investments that protect the most people.

## Designing Roads that Work for People

Transportation safety has taken lessons learned from industrial and workplace safety. We don't prevent workplace injuries primarily by telling workers to be more careful. We made investments in redesigning equipment, adding guardrails, and removing hazards. This same logic applies to our roads.

Safety measures work best when they seem natural and don't ask anything extra from the people using them. A roundabout slows traffic and eliminates the most dangerous types of crashes as long as the driver follows the roadway. A raised crosswalk signals drivers should slow down intuitively. A separated bike lane protects cyclists even when a driver is momentarily distracted. These are all improvements that benefit everyone using the road.

Compare these to a "stop for pedestrians" sign, which only works if a driver sees it, reads it and chooses to act on it— every time for every driver.

## A Clearer Way to Set Priorities

When we decide how to spend limited safety dollars, we should use a framework that asks two questions: How much does it depend on individuals doing the right thing? and How many people does it protect?

The answers guide our priorities, generally from the most to least impactful:

1. **The strongest investments change the road itself**. Building protected intersections, adding pedestrian refuge islands, ensuring curb cuts and ramps, redesigning dangerous curves, and separating fast moving vehicles from people walking, rolling, and biking. These work for everyone, regardless of age, ability, or attention level.
2. Next are **measures built into the system**. Signal timing, leading pedestrian intervals that give people walking or rolling a head start, and latent vehicle safety technology.
3. Then comes the **active measures**. Better signage and markings, seatbelts, vehicle collision warnings., enforcement, and post-crash care.
4. Finally, **education and awareness campaigns**. Driver education, community, outreach, and slow-down campaigns can help shift culture and help people understand new infrastructure. But on their own, they're no match for a road design that puts people in danger.

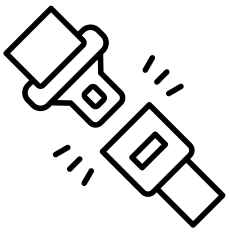
Our goal is a transportation network designed with the understanding that people are human, crashes are preventable, safety requires system redundancies, and the road itself is our most powerful safety tool.

**The most effective safety improvements come from changes to the transportation system itself, not from relying on individual behavior alone.**

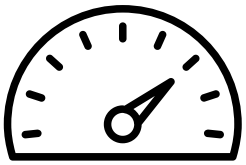
# Regional Spotlight

Between 2020 and 2025, over 115,000 crashes were reported across the Richmond region. These crashes resulted in 744 lives lost and 5,304 people seriously injured, including 163 pedestrians killed and 480 pedestrians seriously injured. In 2024, the most recent year of finalized data, 134 people were killed (a nearly 13% increase from the previous year) while 857 people were seriously injured, marking an 8% decrease. While the serious injury number is a good sign, the figures are still trending up. And many of the same factors continue to contribute to serious injuries and deaths on our roadways.

Across this six-year period, the data reveals key factors that consistently contribute to fatal and severe crashes. These patterns do not exist in isolation: speed, impairment, and lack of restraint cause more deaths in part because roads are designed in ways that amplify their consequences: wide lanes that invite higher speeds, intersections that offer no margin for error, and corridors where a single lapse becomes a fatal outcome.



**Unbelted occupants** accounted for 4% of crashes but **41% of all fatalities**.



**Speeding** factored into 17% of all crashes, but **37% of fatal crashes**.

**Impaired driving** was involved in 20% of all crashes, but **43% of fatal crashes**.

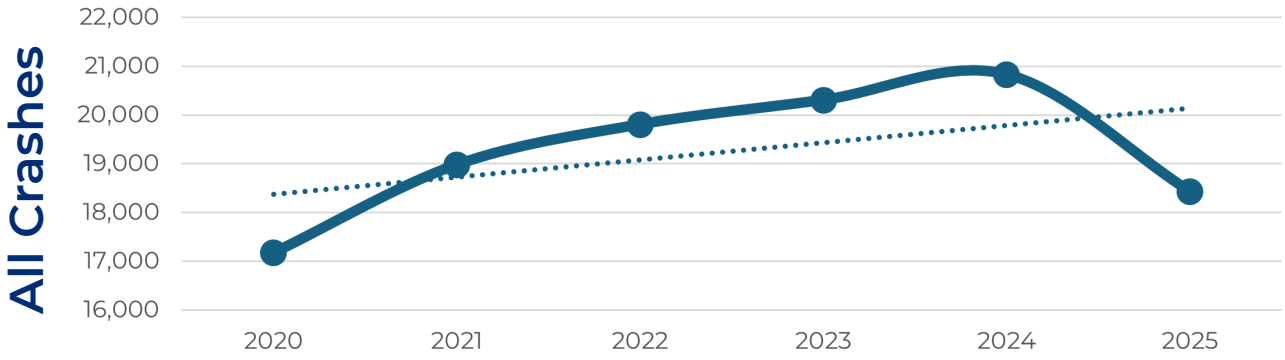
**Pedestrians** were involved in only 1.4% of crashes but made up **nearly one in four deaths (23%)**.

These patterns confirm what national Safe System research has shown: the same risk factors that cause common crashes are the ones that make fatal crashes disproportionately severe.

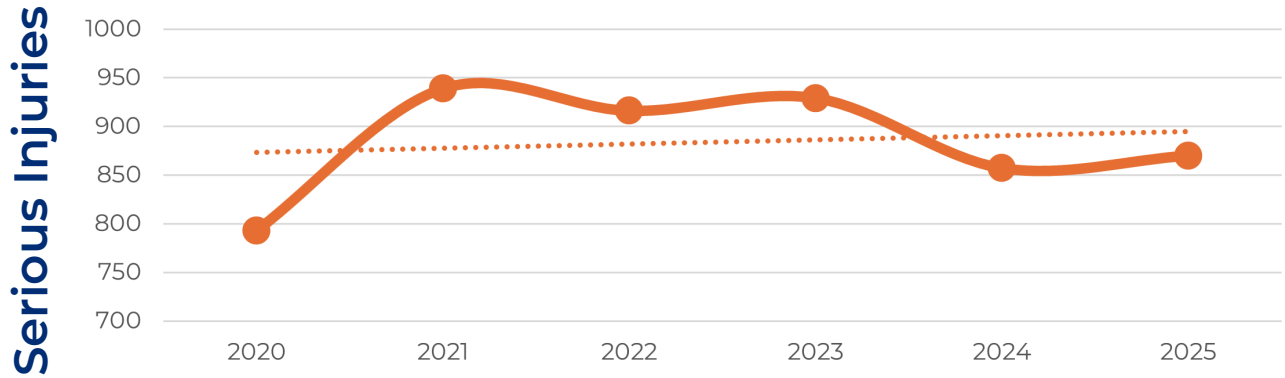
## Safety Trends

The following charts illustrate how total crashes, serious injuries, and fatalities have fluctuated across the region from 2020 through 2025.

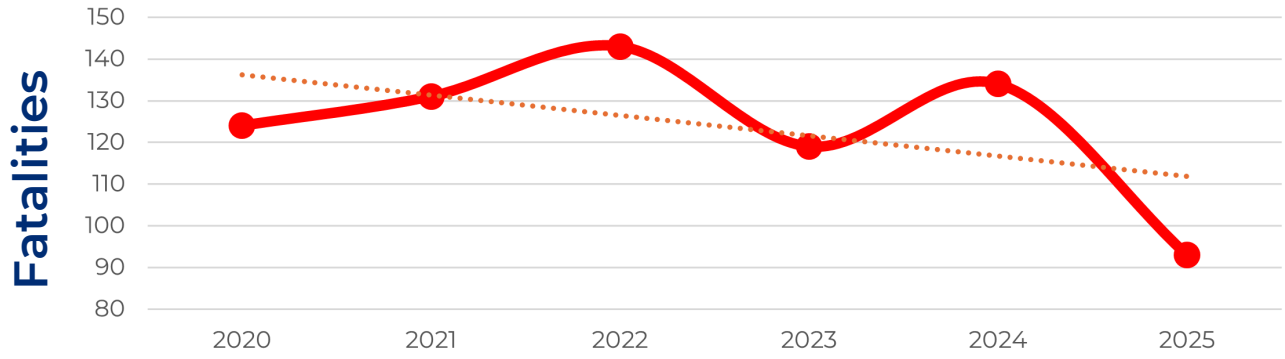
Total reported crashes rose steadily from 2020, reaching a peak around 2024 before declining in 2025. Despite that recent dip, overall crash volumes remain well above where they were at the start of the period, reflecting a post-pandemic surge.




Serious injuries fluctuated but remained relatively stable between roughly 800–950 each year, and the flat trendline reflects that lack of meaningful progress. The most recent data shows a modest decline, though the region continues to see persistent levels of severe crash outcomes year over year.




Fatalities show a more encouraging recent shift. After peaking in 2022 and remaining elevated through 2024, deaths dropped sharply in 2025 to their lowest point in the period shown. The downward trendline reflects this trajectory. Still, context matters: fatalities prior to the pandemic generally held below 100 per year, meaning even the recent decline leaves the region at elevated levels compared to its pre-pandemic baseline. Sustained progress will require continued investment in proven safety interventions targeting the higher-impact crashes—involving speed, impairment, or lack of restraint—that have driven the post-pandemic rise.

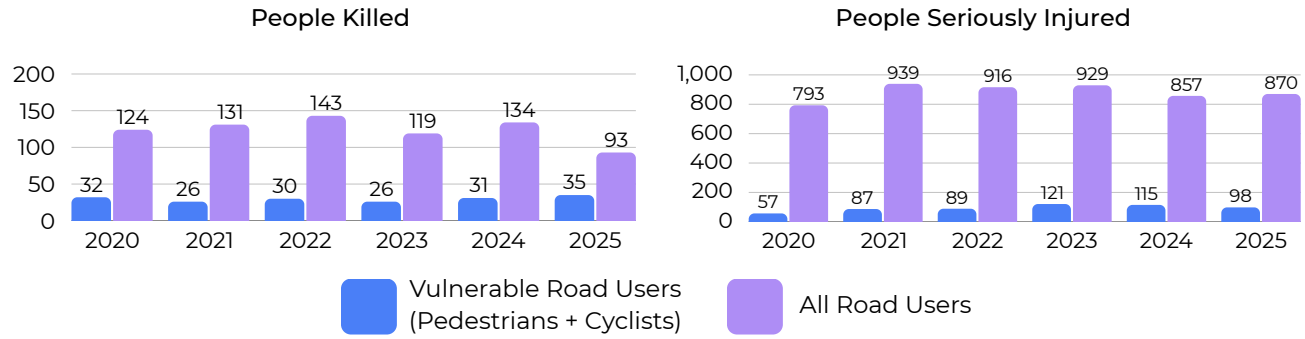



*All data is pulled from the Virginia DMV Traffic Records Electronic Data System (TREDS)*

# The Toll on Vulnerable Road Users

*Those with the Least Protection Face the Greatest Risk*

While pedestrians and cyclists represent a small share of all road users, they are far more likely to be killed or seriously injured when a crash occurs. The data below illustrates just how stark that disproportion has become.




## BETWEEN 2020 AND 2025, PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS REPRESENTED...

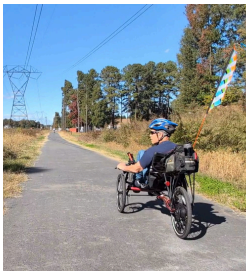
**1.8%** of all crashes

**10.7%** of serious injuries

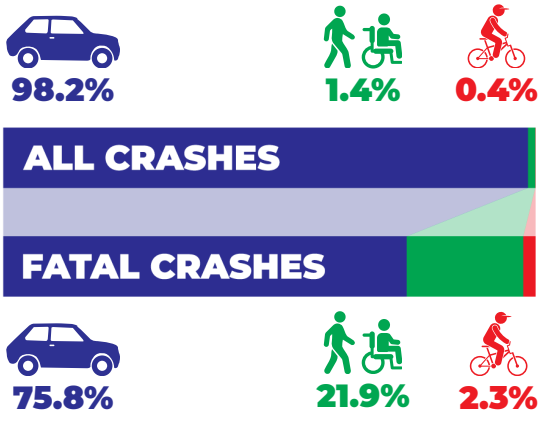
**24.4%** of people killed

## 2025 WAS THE DEADLIEST YEAR FOR PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS BY SHARE OF CRASHES, WHERE THEY REPRESENTED

over **1 in 3** -or- **37.6%** of people killed



### CRASH SUMMARY BY MODE




People walking and biking are involved in 1.8% of all crashes, but almost 25% of those resulting in death (2020–2025)

# Localities

Three of the region's largest jurisdictions have developed formal Safety Action Plans in recent years, each aligned with the Safe System Approach and the national Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) framework. Together, these plans set a strong foundation for coordinated, data-driven safety improvements across the Richmond region.

**Henrico County**
***Arrive Alive* Plan**
**(2025)**

Henrico's plan aims to cut roadway fatalities and serious injuries by 50% by 2035, exceeding the statewide goal set in Virginia's Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP). It applies detailed crash analysis, equity mapping, and project prioritization to guide investments in safer streets, with strong public engagement and systemic countermeasures such as speed management, intersection safety, and pedestrian infrastructure.

**Chesterfield County**
***Road Safety Action Plan***
**(2024)**

Developed under a federal SS4A planning grant, Chesterfield's plan uses a comprehensive crash analysis and high-injury network (HIN) approach to identify corridors and intersections with the greatest risk of fatal and severe crashes. It outlines specific engineering and policy changes—including roadway reconfiguration, targeted enforcement, and education campaigns—and establishes a goal of zero fatalities and serious injuries through long-term implementation.

**City of Richmond**
***Vision Zero* Plan**
**(2023)**

Richmond's Vision Zero Action Plan, originally adopted in 2017 and updated in 2023, commits the city to eliminating all traffic-related deaths and serious injuries by 2030. The plan takes a holistic approach that combines infrastructure design, speed management, equity-driven investment, and public accountability through the Safe and Healthy Streets Commission. Richmond's approach emphasizes transparency and continual evaluation, using a High Injury Street Network (HISN) to guide annual priorities.

Together, these three local plans reflect a consistent regional movement toward Vision Zero principles—placing human life and health at the center of transportation decision-making.

Beyond these action plans, local governments throughout the region have made explicit commitments to safety by incorporating it as a guiding priority in comprehensive plans, capital improvement programs, and transportation policy discussions. These commitments vary in form but share a common vision: **to reduce preventable crashes, promote safer design, and improve outcomes for all road users**.

The RRTPO Policy Board has also reaffirmed roadway safety as a regional priority—directing resources and coordination toward reducing deaths and serious injuries through planning, data analysis, and funding alignment. The inclusion of both the Regional Safety Action Plan update and the Regional Safety Messaging Framework development in the FY2026 UPWP signals the region's shared leadership in advancing this work.

### Relationship Between Regional and Local Plans

This Regional Safety Action Plan update serves as a unifying framework that strengthens and connects local safety initiatives. While each locality's plan responds to its unique network conditions, the regional plan provides the common tools, data, and coordination mechanisms that make individual actions more effective when viewed as part of a larger system.

Specifically, the regional plan:

- Integrates data from all jurisdictions into a consistent regional crash and high-injury network analysis.
- Coordinates priorities across county and city lines, focusing on corridors and crash types that cross boundaries or affect regional travel patterns.
- Supports funding alignment through federal and state programs such as Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A), Virginia Highway Safety Improvements Program (HSIP), and SMART SCALE.
- Links messaging and education through the forthcoming Regional Safety Messaging Framework, ensuring consistent communication across jurisdictions.
- Reinforces accountability by tracking progress toward regional safety targets that align with both local plans and the Virginia Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) goal of cutting fatalities and serious injuries in half by 2045.

By connecting local action to regional strategy, the updated plan helps ensure that every investment contributes to the same overarching vision: a safe and connected transportation system for all people across the Richmond region.

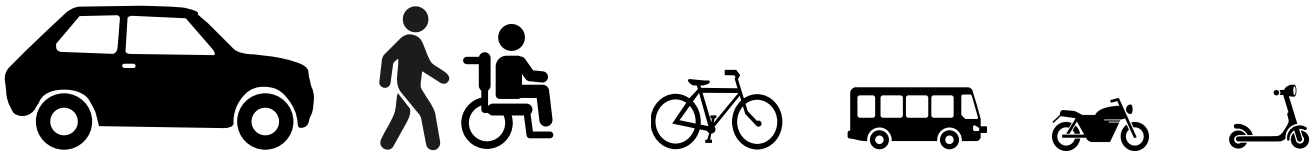
# Public Engagement

Our safety plan update included a public safety perception survey that received **1,073 responses** from around the region. Our community engagement team attended over **30 events** across the PlanRVA region, directly speaking to **over 1,000 stakeholders** about safety and the transportation projects that safety metrics help shape. We heard a diverse range of experiences and thoughts, but certain themes stood out again and again.

First, what was the **demographic breakdown** our survey respondents?

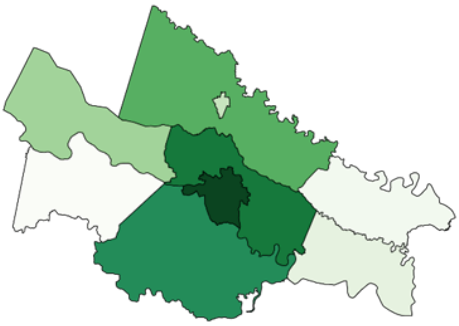
## What is your primary mode of transportation?

**Select up to three**



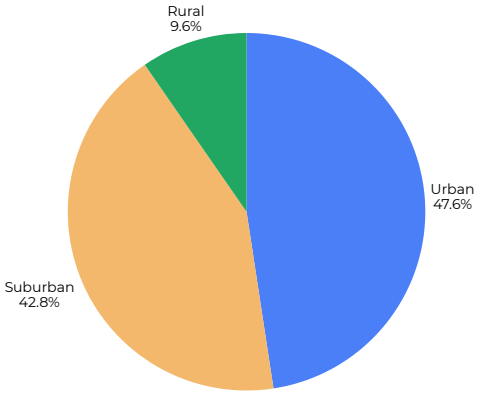
| Automobile | Walking/Rolling | Bicycle | Public Transportation | Motorcycle | Scooter |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 91% | 45% | 25% | 13% | 1% | 1% |

## Where do you live?

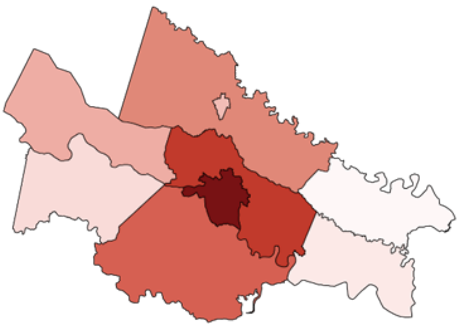


| | |
|---|---|
| **Town of Ashland** | 1.1% |
| **Charles City** | 0.03% |
| **Chesterfield** | 13.9% |
| **Hanover** | 8.3% |
| **Henrico** | 14.8% |
| **Goochland** | 2.1% |
| **New Kent** | 0.3% |
| **Powhatan** | 0.1% |
| **Richmond** | 51.2% |
| **On Tribal Land** | 0.1% |
| **Prefer not to answer** | 4.6% |
| **Other** | 3.3% |

## How would you describe where you live?

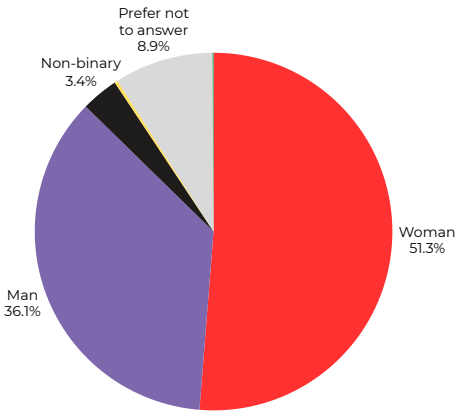



## Where do you work?

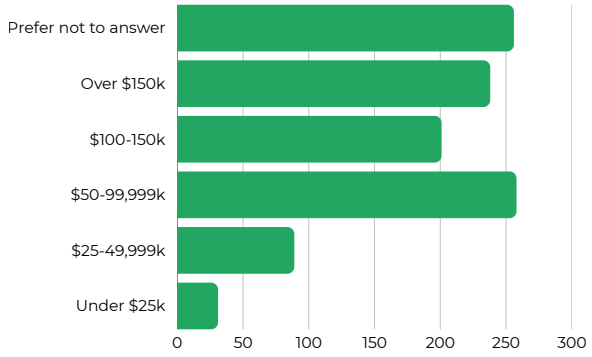


| | |
|---|---|
| **Town of Ashland** | 1.5% |
| **Charles City** | 0.1% |
| **Chesterfield** | 7.0% |
| **Hanover** | 3.2% |
| **Henrico** | 13.0% |
| **Goochland** | 1.8% |
| **New Kent** | 0.0% |
| **Powhatan** | 0.2% |
| **Richmond** | 45.3% |
| **On Tribal Land** | 0.0% |
| **Prefer not to answer** | 10.7% |
| **Other** | 17.3% |

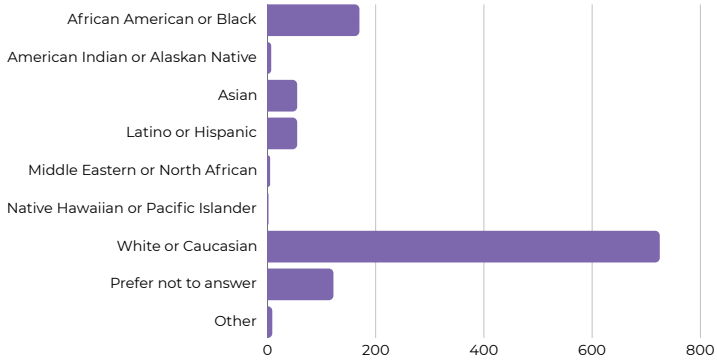
## Gender



## Household Income




## Race/Ethnicity




Next, **what did they tell us?** We asked the following questions and asked people to answer on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Each question includes an average score. The higher the score, the more general agreement there was to the question.

average age:

**39.4**

**Almost half (49.2%) of respondents were between the ages 25–44**

Roughly 15% of respondents were under the age of 25

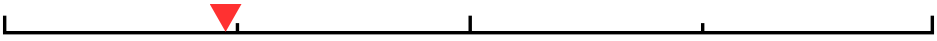
**Behavior** (Strongly Disagree — Strongly Agree)

**Average Score**

It is okay to travel 5-10 mph over the speed limit in a residential area.

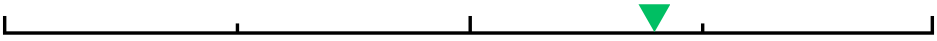
1.69

It is okay to travel 5-10 mph over the speed limit in an urban area.



1.99

It is okay to travel 5-10 mph over the speed limit on an interstate or expressway.

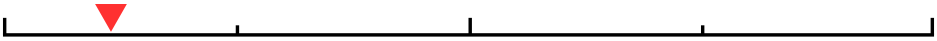


3.83

It is okay to travel 5-10 mph over the speed limit in a school zone.

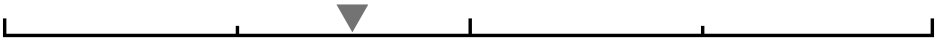
1.26 **Strongest Disagreement**

It is okay to travel 5-10 mph over the speed limit in a construction zone.



1.49

It is okay to travel 5-10 mph over the speed limit if no other vehicles or pedestrians are present.

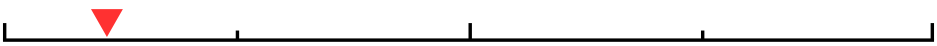


2.49

Drivers should always yield to pedestrians at crosswalks, even if they are not marked.

4.28

It is okay to use a mobile phone while driving as long as you are paying attention to the road.



1.41

Speeding is more dangerous than other risky driving behaviors (such as distracted driving or impaired driving).

2.74

**Design** (Strongly Disagree — Strongly Agree)

**Average Score**

Lowering speed limits in residential areas would improve safety.

3.53

Traffic signals should be adjusted to give pedestrians more time to cross the street.

4.16

Roads should be designed to encourage slower driving speeds in residential areas.

4.43

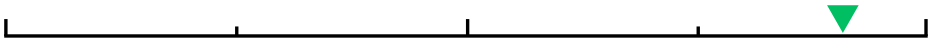
Roads should be designed to encourage slower driving speeds in areas with high pedestrian or cyclist activity.

4.55

Road design has a greater impact on driver speed than enforcement.

4.08

I support safer conditions for people outside of a motor vehicle (traffic calming, crosswalks, push-button crossings, bike lanes) even if it means my trip might take 2-5 minutes longer.



4.66

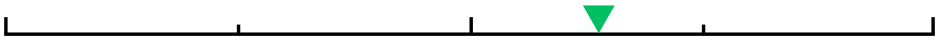
**Strongest Agreement**

**Enforcement** (Strongly Disagree — Strongly Agree)

I support the use of automated speed enforcement (e.g., speed cameras) in school zones.

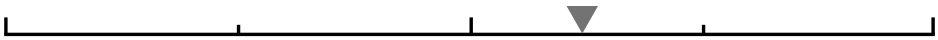
3.94

I support the use of automated speed enforcement in construction zones.



3.57

I support the use of automated speed enforcement in residential areas.

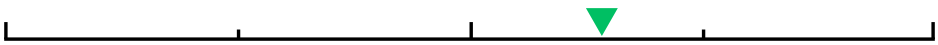


3.42

I support the use of automated speed enforcement on any public roadway.

3.07

Strict enforcement of speed limits is necessary to improve safety.



3.58

**In Your Community** (Strongly Disagree — Strongly Agree)

I feel safe walking or biking in my community.

2.94

I feel safe driving in my community.

3.46

How often do you see drivers exceeding the speed limit in your community?

4.42

How often do you see drivers failing to yield to pedestrians in crosswalks?

3.97

How often do you witness distracted driving (e.g., texting, eating, using a phone) in your area?

4.42

This word cloud shows the primary themes that emerged from the open-ended question:

**What are the biggest transportation safety concerns you see in your community?**


*The larger the term, the more frequently it was mentioned.*

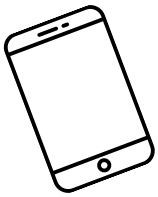
## Themes within Survey Results

From the 1,073 survey responses, 727 individuals provided input to the question above. The following themes are highlighted to provide more context to what we heard from around the region.

The following quotes under each theme are responses to *"What are the biggest transportation safety concerns you see in your community?"*

**Speeding** was the concern most directly called out, with over 200 mentions. Concerns ranged from general speeding to mentions of specific corridors, with speeding linked to other dangers they witness.

- *"Roads are designed for excessive speed, dangerous vehicles... and dangerous driver behavior."*
- *"I walk my sons to school. We have jumped out of the way to avoid being hit. Protect children. Make walkable/bikeable communities."*
- *"There needs to be... speed bumps to slow down those that ignore the 25 mph posted speed limit."*



**Distracted driving**, and particularly phone use, was often mentioned in the same breath as speeding. Responses describe it as commonplace and under-enforced.

- *"If you're a passenger in a car, look around at drivers — probably 50–60% are on their phones."*
- *"I am so sick of seeing drivers with their phone in their hand. I am sick of nearly being hit by a car while walking or cycling because drivers aren't looking."*
- *"Texting while driving! Youth not taking distracted driving or speeding serious."*

**Pedestrian safety**, with failure to stop for people at crosswalks and a general culture of incivility toward fellow road users, was frequently cited. Many described near-misses or actually being hit.

- *"The biggest challenge for Richmond right now is ensuring pedestrians crossing roadways are not killed... It's reached a crisis level."*
- *"People are dying from this issue and it needs to be strictly enforced."*
- *"Cars... don't typically yield to pedestrians waiting to cross. I've even been honked at for crossing in a crosswalk."*

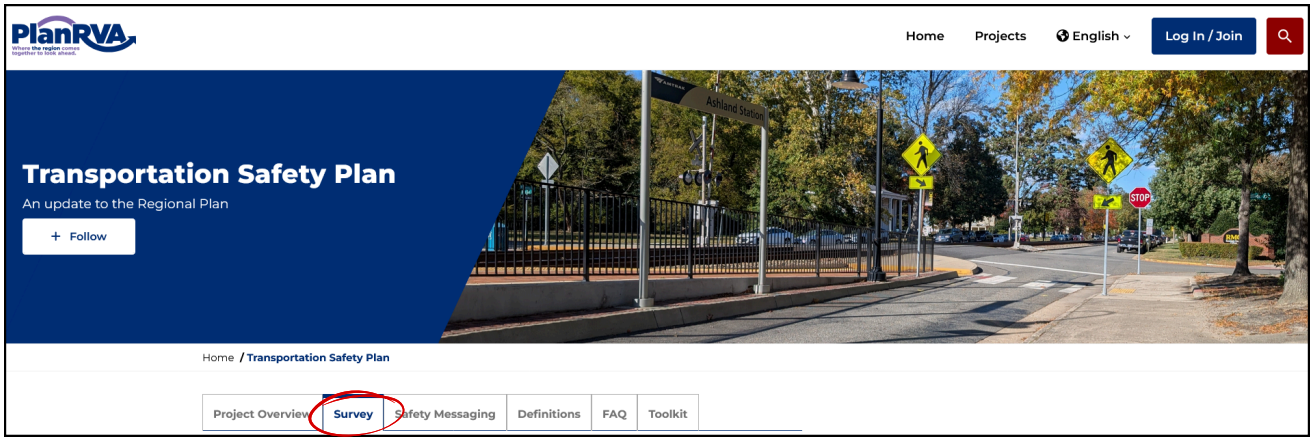
**Lack of pedestrian and cycling infrastructure** was among the most passionately expressed themes. Complaints covered missing sidewalks, disconnected and unprotected bike lanes, debris, or inadequate crosswalks. From a driver perspective, it was also pointed out how dangerous it can feel to share the road with pedestrians and cyclists, particularly in rural or low-light areas.

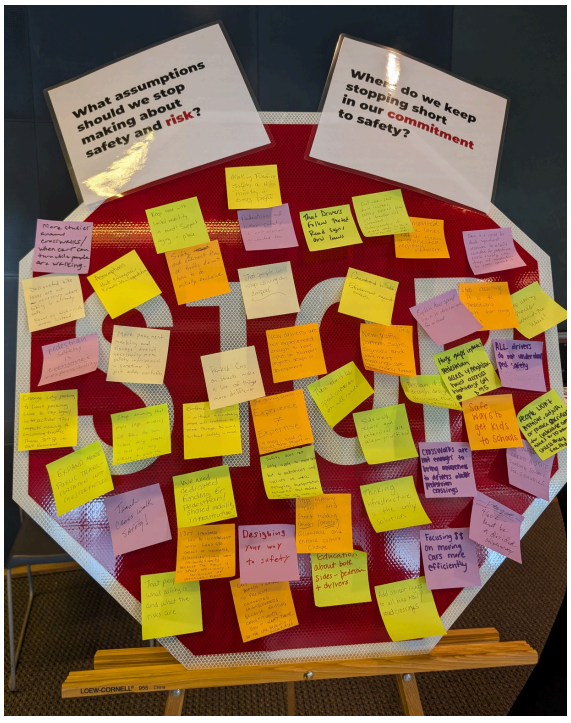
- *"There are no crosswalks in major intersections on Broad St. where there are many bus riders and pedestrians. There are also no sidewalks so pedestrians have to enter the street at times."*
- *"[We do] a terrible job at maintaining bike lanes... [many] still have trash, leaves, sticks, rocks from six months ago or more."*
- *"Not enough safe pedestrian pathways! Rural communities have really dropped the ball in development that includes safe people pathways to reach local amenities like libraries, parks, grocery stores."*

**Other common themes** include...

- Running red lights and stop signs
- Road designs that encourage high speeds or dangerous driving
- Lack of transportation mode choice
- Poor visibility near intersections, especially from parking near corners
- Need for traffic calming
- Aggressive and reckless driving culture
- Road, sidewalk, bike lane conditions and maintenance needs
- Privacy issues and surveillance concerns around automated enforcement
- Rural roads with hills and curves (and concerns of sharing road with cyclists)

Full survey results and all comments can be found on our project engagement page, engage.planrva.org/safety-plan.





*Left: A safety engagement activity at the Pathways to the Future Regional Symposium*

*Above: PlanRVA staff chats with a youth group at the Pine Camp Arts and Community Center*

# Other Comments Received

### *Online Discussions*

An additional 130 comments were drawn from a verified Reddit post to the RVA subreddit asking Richmond area residents how safe they feel driving, biking, or walking in the region. The posts generated candid and detailed responses that were often more personal and emotionally direct than the formal survey. The dominant tone is one of resigned anxiety punctuated by specific near-miss experiences or examples of unsafe conditions.

Many comments shared similar themes brought up in the survey, depicting a culture of distraction, recklessness, and selfishness that is worsened by the physical nature of the roads. Respondents described a road system that sets people up to fail: wide lanes that invite speed, intersections that obscure sight lines, and crossings that offer little protection to anyone outside a vehicle. Rather than forgiving the inevitable mistakes that come with human error, the physical design of many roads invites and compounds them.

A notable pattern was how many respondents described having actively changed how they move through the city because they no longer feel safe. Giving up cycling was a common adaptation.

### *Youth Spotlight*

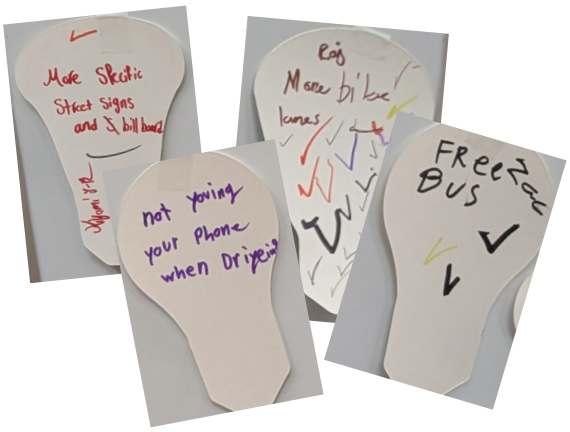
We heard from over 100 people under the age of 18 during the engagement process, with two primary sources being *Teen Summit RVA,* a high school leadership summit held at the Greater Richmond Convention Center, and a Cultural Roots Homeschool Co-op attended by two dozen K-12 students. Here is a summary of the youth voice.

**Speeding and distracted driving dominate, even more so than with adults**
The under-18 responses are notably simpler and more direct than those from adults, with younger respondents overwhelmingly naming two issues: speeding and phone use. These concerns appear in roughly two-thirds of all their responses, often as standalone one- or two-word answers.

**Pedestrian vulnerability is a personal concern**
Several responses reflect the specific experience of being a young person on foot. They describe being dependent on adults to drive, crossing streets near schools, riding buses, and moving through spaces not designed with them in mind.

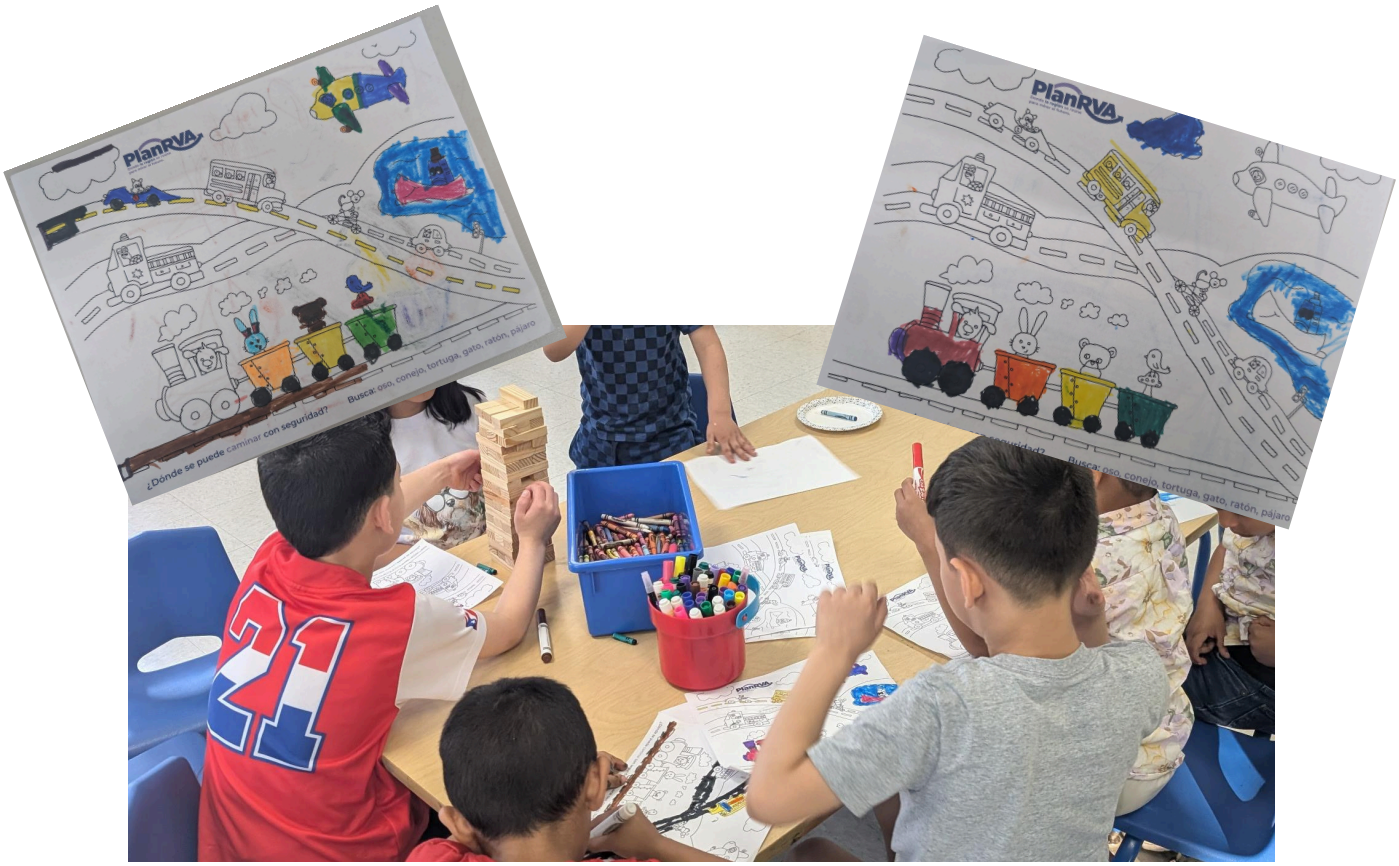
These responses suggest a sense of vulnerability as non-drivers in a car-dominated environment, a perspective that rarely surfaces in adult responses.

The K-12 ideas board is particularly valuable because it captures unprompted aspirational thinking rather than complaints or concerns. The ideas are concrete, practical, and largely infrastructure-focused:




- More sidewalks (mentioned twice)
- More crosswalks
- More bike lanes and bike paths
- More accessible public transit in residential areas
- Free transportation / free buses
- More speed bumps
- Bigger streets
- Smoother roads
- More specific street signs and billboards
- Not using your phone when driving

The list is telling. Young people are asking for things that would let them move around more independently and safely: sidewalks to walk on, bike lanes to ride in, and buses to ride for free. The emphasis on transit access and free fares is distinct from adult survey responses and reflects the reality that most young people can't drive and are often dependent on adults or public systems to get anywhere.



# Moving Freely

## Disability, Safety, and the Right to Public Space

*From a conversation with D. Allen, a Richmond-based artist and wheelchair user whose experience navigating this region reframes what we mean when we talk about safe streets.*

D. Allen, a 39-year-old multidisciplinary artist who uses a power wheelchair due to Ehlers-Danlos syndrome, was struck by a hit-and-run driver in a Minneapolis crosswalk in 2023 just two months after finally receiving the chair following a year-long state approval process. The crash totaled the chair, concussed them severely, and left them without a mobility aid to get home. That experience sits at the center of how D. now moves through Richmond since moving to the city: as someone who goes as far as they can and figures out what's possible, but who does so knowing the street has already tried to take that from them once.

***"Leaving the house independently is incredibly important for my mental health, as I think it is for many of us... I don't ever leave the house without remembering that I might be killed in the street. It feels very present to me all of the time."***

That fear resonates with concerns that most survey respondents also named: the region's walking and biking safety score averaged poorly across every locality. But D.'s experience better humanizes that number. The region's streets are built around what D. calls "stairs brain": a design imagination that begins and ends with the nondisabled body, rendering wheelchair users invisible and using that invisibility to justify doing nothing. The result, as D. describes it, is a region where disabled people are effectively locked in their houses. Not metaphorically, but as a daily material fact.

Disability scholar Mia Mingus uses the term "access intimacy" in their essay *Access Intimacy: the Missing Link*, to describe "that elusive, hard to describe feeling when someone else 'gets' your access needs. The kind of eerie comfort that your disabled self feels with someone on a purely access level." D. experiences the opposite most of the time. They have spent real time and energy making Richmond marginally more navigable: convincing businesses to install ramps, mapping which routes are passable and which cause pain flares, calculating which crosswalks are survivable. That labor is not something nondisabled people are asked to do. It is work extracted from the person least resourced to absorb it, and it is work that safe, connected, well-maintained infrastructure would make unnecessary.

***"We're one of the few minoritized, oppressed social groups that you could become at any time. Everybody is one collision away from becoming a wheelchair user."***

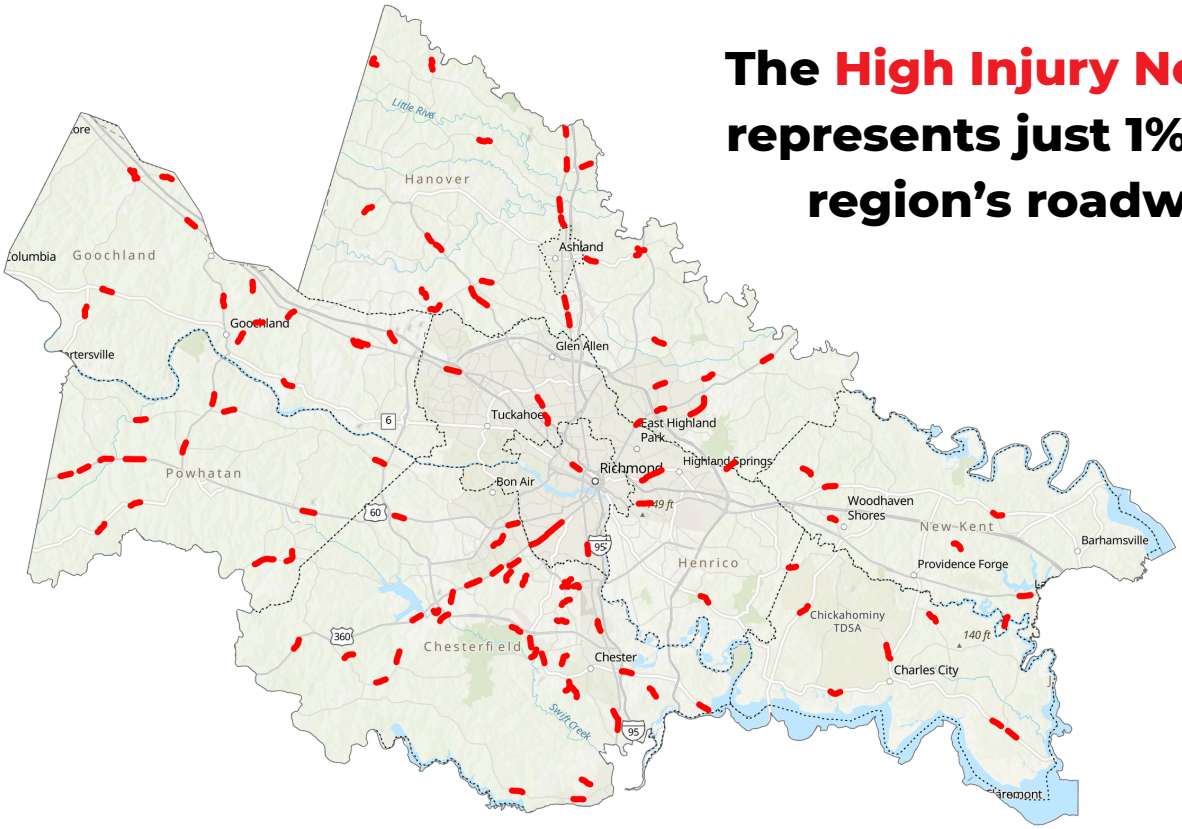
This is not just a moral argument. It is a design argument. A street that fails a wheelchair user today fails everyone who will ever age, recover from injury, push a stroller, or navigate this region without a car. Disabled people are underrepresented in this plan's survey data (fewer than 1% of open-ended responses named disability or accessibility directly) not because the issue is marginal, but because infrastructure that locks people in their houses also locks them out of civic participation. Disabled residents who cannot safely reach public events, who have learned that naming their needs produces little result, or who have simply stopped expecting to be heard, are underrepresented in this data for the same reason they are underrepresented in public space: the system has not been designed to include them.

# High Injury Network

What residents described in surveys and outreach (dangerous speeds, unprotected crossings, corridors that feel designed for vehicles and not people) shows up in the crash data. Not all roads carry equal risk. Across the Richmond region, fatal and serious injury crashes are not distributed evenly as they occur on a relatively small share of the roadway system. Identifying and acting on these corridors is the foundation of a data-driven safety strategy.

The High Injury Network (HIN) is a map of the road segments where fatal and serious injury crashes are most concentrated. It is built from five years of crash data geocoded to roadway centerlines, with each crash assigned a severity weight that reflects its relative human cost. This weighting ensures that the most catastrophic outcomes drive the analysis.

Crashes were linked to 0.1-mile road segments and aggregated using a 0.5-mile sliding window, which captures the way crashes cluster along corridors rather than at isolated points. Segments were then ranked by severity, and corridors were selected until they collectively accounted for 70 percent of all fatal and serious injury crashes in the region. The result (consistent with HIN methodologies used in Vision Zero programs and FHWA safety planning nationwide) is that a small fraction of the region's road network accounts for the large majority of its most serious harm.




**The High Injury Network represents just 1% of our region's roadways**

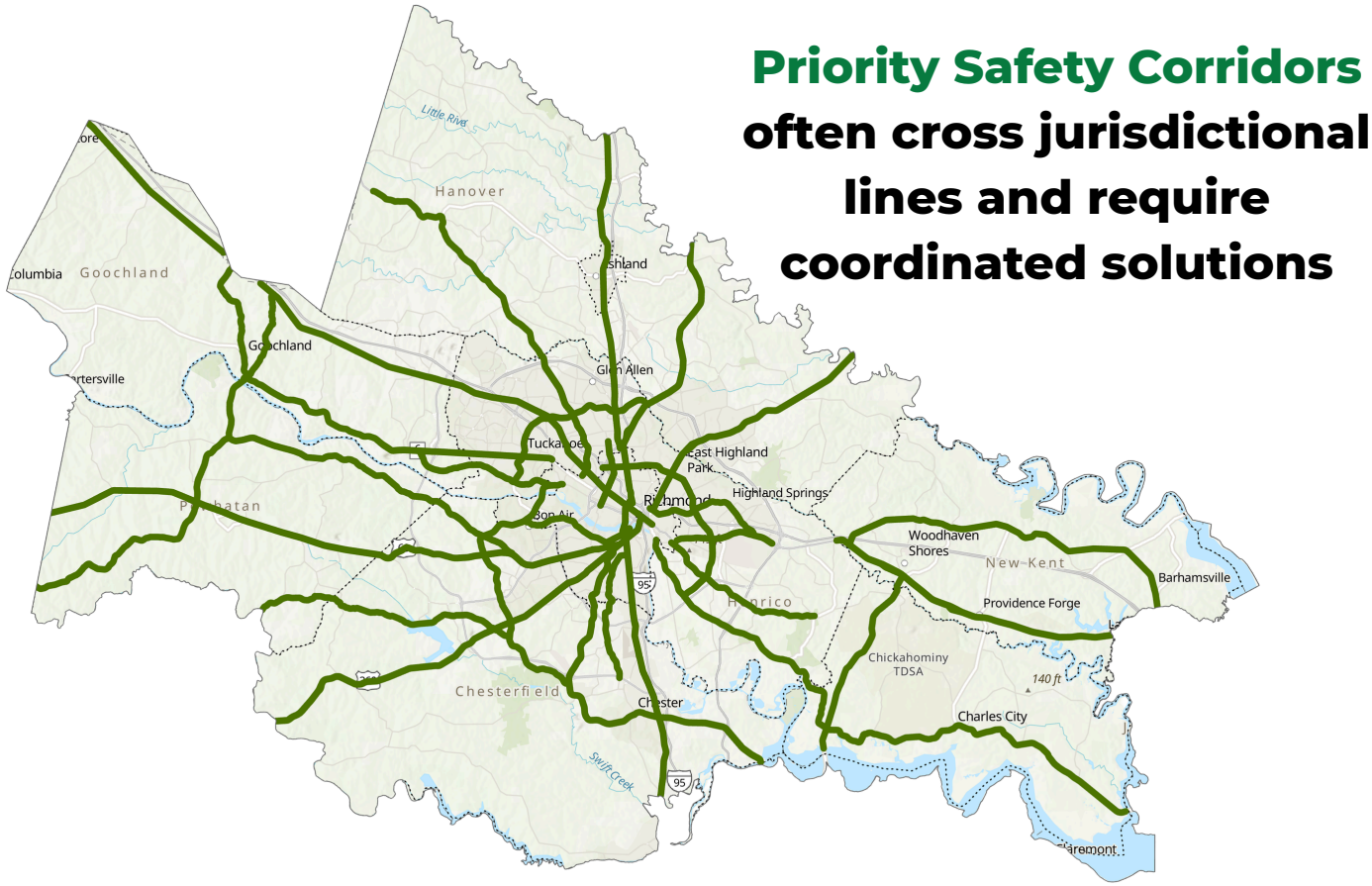
## What the Network Shows

The Richmond Regional HIN identifies the corridors where safety investment will have the greatest measurable impact. These are not simply the busiest roads or the most urbanized areas, they are the places where the combination of traffic volumes, design conditions, speeds, and road user mix has produced repeated, severe outcomes. Concentrating resources here through targeted infrastructure improvements, signal timing, speed management, and enforcement reflects the Safe System principle that systemic problems require systemic solutions.

The HIN also serves as a diagnostic tool. When viewed alongside data on crash type, contributing factors, and road user characteristics, the network reveals patterns: the role of high-speed arterials in pedestrian fatalities, the overrepresentation of certain intersections, the corridors where alcohol-involved or speed-related crashes cluster. These patterns point toward the types of countermeasures most likely to reduce harm.

## Priority Safety Corridors

The High Injury Network is a precise tool that identifies where crash severity is highest at the corridor level. But translating that precision into regional planning and multi-jurisdictional coordination requires a complementary layer of analysis that operates at a larger scale. Priority Safety Corridors serve that purpose.



Priority Safety Corridors are extended roadway segments, typically several miles in length, drawn from and informed by the HIN but organized around the regional road network as it is actually traveled and governed. Where the HIN reflects the statistical geography of serious crashes, Priority Safety Corridors reflect the functional geography of the region: the major arterials and state routes that connect localities, cross jurisdictional boundaries, and carry the highest volumes of mixed traffic.

In a small number of cases, a corridor may include segments with limited or no HIN coverage. This reflects situations where crash data like fatal and serious injury crashes, hot spot analysis, or community-reported concerns indicates meaningful risk that falls just below the HIN threshold, or where network continuity and jurisdictional logic make inclusion appropriate.

Priority Safety Corridors are intentionally focused. Not every road with scattered crash history qualifies. The goal is a manageable set of corridors where coordinated investment across planning departments, public works agencies, and VDOT can produce measurable results.

**Interstates and limited-access freeways** were excluded from the HIN and Priority Safety Corridor analysis. Safety improvements on interstates are addressed through separate VDOT and federal programs outside the scope of this plan's action framework.

Interstate crashes are, however, *included* in the regional crash totals and broader data analysis presented in this plan. Excluding them from those figures would under-count the true scope of serious harm occurring in the region and would misrepresent the overall safety picture. Their inclusion in summary statistics ensures the plan reflects the full landscape of crash risk, even where the recommended actions are targeted elsewhere. In short: interstates are excluded from the *prioritization tool* but included in the *data record*.

The HIN methodology and list of priority safety corridors can be found in the appendix.

## Informing Road Safety Assessments

Priority Safety Corridors are the primary input to the region's future Road Safety Assessment (RSA) program outlined on page 24. Because RSAs require significant staff time, interdisciplinary coordination, and community engagement, they cannot be applied everywhere at once. The corridor framework provides the prioritized pipeline that makes RSA deployment systematic rather than reactive. Corridors designated as priorities will be scheduled for formal RSAs, which will in turn generate tiered recommendations, ranging from lower-cost, near-term quick-build treatments to longer-range capital improvements, that feed directly into the regional project pipeline.

The multi-jurisdictional character of many Priority Safety Corridors is a particular strength of this approach. By framing safety investment around corridors that cross boundaries, this plan creates a natural structure for the kind of inter-agency coordination that both effective safety practice and competitive grant applications require. RSAs conducted on cross-boundary corridors produce shared findings, shared accountability, and shared opportunity.

# Safety Actions

These six actions are designed to build on one another in sequence and in parallel. Actions 1–3 establish the regional tools and framework (standards, assessment process, and the demonstration toolkit) that make informed, consistent implementation possible. Action 4 puts those tools to work on the ground. Action 5 ensures this plan does not operate in isolation, connecting it to the broader ecosystem of safety-related policies and programs across the region. Action 6 holds us accountable over time.

## Safety Actions

**Action 1**
Create A Regional Street Design Manual

**Action 2**
Develop Regional Road Safety Assessment Program

**Action 3**
Develop A Regional Quick Build Library with Kit of Parts

**Action 4**
Implement Quick Build Projects using Kit of Parts and guidance from RSAs

**Action 5**
Advance Complementary Safety Plans

**Action 6**
Track Changes and Keep Safety as a Regional Priority

No single action is sufficient on its own.

1. The Street Design Manual provides the "what"
2. The Road Safety Assessment (RSA) program identifies "where and why"
3. The Quick Build Kit of Parts answers "how" (quickly)
4. Demonstration projects prove the approach works
5. Complementary plans address factors and issues related to safety
6. The safety dashboard ensures progress is visible, shared, and sustained

Community feedback helped set the priorities:

| What We Heard | How it's Reflected in the Actions |
|---|---|
| Speed is the top concern; design is needed, not just enforcement | Street Design Manual and Quick Build Library center speed management as a core treatment type |
| Walking and biking feel unsafe; infrastructure is missing | RSA program explicitly evaluates pedestrian/bike conditions; quick builds prioritize crossings and bike facilities |
| New infrastructure often still misses the mark | Manual sets clear, vetted standards so that new construction gets it right the first time |
| People want to see changes | Quick build implementation is designed to produce visible, measurable results in the near term |
| Nothing significant seems to be getting done | Safety dashboard makes progress transparent and public |

# Action 1: Create a Regional Street Design Manual

The Richmond region already has a foundation to build on. PlanRVA's *Complete Streets Pilot Project* established that a shared regional approach to street design is both feasible and needed, and the City of Richmond's *Better Streets Manual* demonstrated what locally grounded design guidance can look like in practice. What the region still lacks is a consolidated, regionally adopted resource that translates those principles into consistent, context-sensitive guidance across all jurisdictions and all street types, from urban main streets to rural connectors. This guide would not override or compete with *VDOT's Road Design Manual*, which governs the engineering and regulatory requirements that all localities must meet. Instead, it would function more like the FHWA *Small Town and Rural Design Guide* or NACTO's *Urban Street Design Guide*: a practitioner-facing document that shows localities and designers how to go further, applying proven safety treatments and complete streets principles within the parameters of VDOT and local standards.

**Key outcomes:** All participating localities have access to a shared regional design guide grounded in the street typology framework developed through this plan, with guidance appropriate to urban, suburban, and rural contexts. The guide translates complete streets principles into actionable direction organized by typology. It does not replace existing engineering standards but complements them, giving localities a resource to reference when designing for safety outcomes that minimum standards alone do not guarantee.

| Task | Description | Timeline |
|---|---|---|
| 1.1 | Form a regional steering committee to establish the guide's purpose, scope, and relationship to existing standards explicitly at the outset | Year 1 |
| 1.2 | Conduct public and stakeholder engagement to define community expectations for different street types | Year 1 |
| 1.3 | Draft design specifications for each street typology, organized around context and user experience rather than engineering minimums | Years 1-2 |
| 1.4 | Develop illustrative cross-sections, countermeasure menus, and multimodal design standards for each typology | Year 2 |
| 1.5 | Pilot review and feedback: circulate draft with localities, developers, and advocates | Year 2 |
| 1.6 | Finalize and formally adopt Regional Street Design Manual | Year 3 |
| 1.7 | Develop training and technical assistance so localities with limited staff capacity can apply the guide effectively in project scoping, site plan review, and grant applications | Year 3 |
| 1.8 | Establish a regular review cycle (every 3–5 years) to update standards as practice evolves | Years 5+, ongoing |

**Lead:** PlanRVA, in partnership with locality planning and public works departments
**Support:** VDOT, FHWA, regional transit providers, disability and advocacy organizations, public health partners

# Action 2: Develop a Regional RSA Program

Road Safety Assessments (RSAs) are among the most evidence-based tools available for systematically identifying crash risk and generating actionable recommendations, recognized as a proven safety countermeasure with documented crash reductions. Across the Richmond region, RSAs have been used inconsistently and largely at the project level, with limited integration of community knowledge or demographic analysis. This action establishes a coordinated, regional RSA program within the RRTPO's Unified Planning Work Program that pairs rigorous technical analysis with structured community involvement, making the process more accessible and ensuring that residents (particularly those in communities that are disproportionately affected by serious crashes) can contribute meaningfully to identifying what makes their streets unsafe. Location prioritization will draw on the High Injury Network, demographic and health overlays, and community-reported concerns, directing resources where the need is greatest.

**Key outcomes:** A functioning, multi-jurisdictional RSA program with clear protocols, trained interdisciplinary teams, a community engagement component, and a recurring annual cycle. RSA findings generate a pipeline of tiered recommendations that feed directly into the Quick Build program (Action 4) and into longer-range capital project planning and funding applications. An accessible public repository of RSA findings builds transparency and demonstrates progress.

| Task | Description | Timeline |
|---|---|---|
| 2.1 | Develop RSA protocols adapted from state and national guidance, with a built-in community engagement component | Year 1 |
| 2.2 | Establish a multidisciplinary RSA team roster, including engineering, planning, public health, emergency services, and disability representation | Year 1 |
| 2.3 | Develop a location prioritization methodology using the HIN, demographic/health data, crash history, and community input | Year 1 |
| 2.4 | Design and pilot a public-facing community assessment component (structured walk/bike audits and resident observation guides) for use alongside technical site visits | Years 1– 2 |
| 2.5 | Conduct first round of RSAs at 5–8 priority locations, with geographic and typological representation across the region; produce formal reports with tiered recommendations | Year 2 |
| 2.6 | Create a publicly accessible RSA findings database linking assessment results to the project pipeline and funding opportunities | Years 2–3, ongoing |

**Lead:** PlanRVA, locality public works and planning departments
**Support:** VDOT, community organizations, public health partners, disability advocates, emergency services agencies

# Action 3: Develop a Regional Quick Build Library

Quick build treatments using low-cost, rapidly deployable safety improvements like flexible delineators, high-visibility crosswalk markings, temporary curb extensions, and protected bike lane elements have proven highly effective at reducing crash severity and changing driver behavior. But to be deployed consistently and efficiently across multiple jurisdictions, localities need a shared, pre-approved toolkit that defines eligible treatments, materials, specifications, and evaluation methods. This action creates that shared library, reducing duplication of effort and enabling localities of all sizes to act quickly when an RSA or community concern identifies a safety need.

**Key outcomes:** A regionally adopted Quick Build Kit of Parts with pre-approved countermeasures, specifications, and guidance on application by street typology. Localities can move from RSA recommendation to on-the-ground treatment in weeks rather than years.

| Task | Description | Timeline |
|---|---|---|
| 3.1 | Inventory existing quick build treatments in use by Richmond region localities and comparable peer regions | Year 1 |
| 3.2 | Review national and state guidance for applicable treatments | Year 1 |
| 3.3 | Develop a tiered treatment menu organized by crash type, street typology, and installation complexity | Year 1 |
| 3.4 | Define material specifications, procurement options, and installation standards for each treatment | Years 1– 2 |
| 3.5 | Develop a before/after evaluation protocol including speed, volume, crash, and community perception metrics | Years 1– 2 |
| 3.6 | Pilot test 3–5 Kit of Parts treatments in partnership with at least two localities | Year 2 |
| 3.7 | Refine kit based on pilot experience; formally adopt as a regional resource through the RRTPO | Years 2–3 |
| 3.8 | Publish the library in a publicly accessible, web-based format with downloadable guidance for locality staff | Year 3 |
| 3.9 | Update library on a rolling basis as new treatments are tested and evaluated | Year 3+, ongoing |

**Lead:** PlanRVA
**Support:** Locality traffic engineering and public works staff, VDOT, FHWA

# Action 4: Implement Quick Build Projects

Developing the tools (Actions 1–3) only matters if they are used. This action puts the Kit of Parts to work, translating RSA recommendations and community safety concerns into physical changes on the ground. Quick build projects serve a dual purpose: they improve safety immediately, and they generate before/after data that can make the case for permanent infrastructure investment. In neighborhoods where residents have long reported feeling unsafe and where crash data confirms elevated risk, visible action builds trust and demonstrates institutional commitment to Safe Streets.

**Key outcomes:** A sustained pipeline of quick build safety projects implemented across the region, with measurable safety outcomes documented and shared. Projects are sequenced to align with capital improvement programs where possible, enabling temporary treatments to inform permanent design.

| Task | Description | Timeline |
|---|---|---|
| 4.1 | Establish a regional quick build project selection process using RSA findings, HIN data, and equity criteria | Year 1 |
| 4.2 | Select first cohort of 3–6 quick build project locations, with at least one in each participating locality | Year 2 |
| 4.3 | Engage community members in selected project areas prior to installation; communicate purpose and expected changes | Year 2 |
| 4.4 | Install first cohort of quick build treatments using Kit of Parts specifications | Year 2 |
| 4.5 | Collect before/after data (speed, pedestrian and bike activity, community feedback) at project sites | Year 2, 3–6 months post install |
| 4.6 | Publish findings and share results publicly; present to local governing bodies | Years 2–3 |
| 4.7 | Expand to second cohort of projects; refine selection and installation process based on lessons learned | Year 3 |
| 4.8 | Establish annual quick build project cycle, targeting at least 4–8 new installations per year region-wide | Year 3+, ongoing |
| 4.9 | Identify quick build sites for conversion to permanent infrastructure; advance through the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) | Years 3–5, ongoing |

**Lead:** Locality public works departments, with PlanRVA coordination
**Support:** Community partners, VDOT, local planning commissions

# Action 5: Advance Complementary Safety Plans

Basic safe street design is necessary but not sufficient. Crash risk is also shaped by vehicle speeds, lighting conditions, accessibility gaps, and land use patterns that generate high pedestrian and cyclist exposure on unsafe corridors. A Safe System approach requires that these factors be addressed through coordinated plans and policies that are integrated components of a regional safety strategy. This action tasks the region with mapping the existing planning landscape, identifying gaps, and either developing or advocating for the complementary plans needed.

Priority areas include: speed and volume management, roadway lighting, pedestrian accessibility and ADA compliance, and land use policies that reduce VMT.

**Key outcomes:** A clear regional inventory of existing safety-related plans and policies, with gaps identified. At least two new complementary planning efforts initiated (or existing plans updated) to address identified gaps. Stronger coordination between transportation safety planning and public health, housing, and land use planning at the regional level.

| Task | Description | Timeline |
|---|---|---|
| 5.1 | Inventory existing safety-adjacent plans across the region | Year 1 |
| 5.2 | Identify gaps: which localities lack key complementary plans; which plans are outdated or silent on safety | Year 1 |
| 5.3 | Prioritize plan development needs based on HIN overlap, crash data, and demographic/health analysis | Year 1 |
| 5.4 | Advocate for and support development of speed management plans at the locality level; share regional data and analysis | Years 1– 2 |
| 5.5 | Conduct or support a regional lighting assessment focused on HIN corridors and high-pedestrian locations | Year 2 |
| 5.6 | Support locality ADA Transition Plan updates with safety-focused prioritization methodology | Years 2–3 |
| 5.7 | Integrate land use and VMT reduction strategies into the regional LRTP update process | Years 2–4 |
| 5.8 | Establish a recurring coordination structure to align plan development and updates across agencies | Year 2, ongoing |

**Lead:** PlanRVA, in coordination with locality planning departments
**Support:** VDOT, public health agencies, advocacy organizations, FHWA

# Action 6: Track Safety Progress & Keep as Priority

Plans succeed or fade depending on whether progress is visible and accountability is maintained. This action creates the infrastructure for ongoing tracking — a public-facing Regional Safety Dashboard that reports on crash trends, project implementation, and action plan milestones — and embeds safety into the region's regular planning and programming processes. Transparency is not just a communication strategy; it is a mechanism for keeping political will alive and ensuring that resources continue to flow toward safety over time. As a regional body, we should regularly revisit the funding framework to ensure safety is prioritized and regional projects reflect best practices to improve safety outcomes.

**Key outcomes:** A Regional Safety Task Force that convenes on a regular, structured basis. A regularly updated Regional Safety Dashboard, accessible to the public and policymakers alike. Annual progress reporting tied to this plan's action items and safety performance targets. Safety integrated into regional transportation programming decisions (TIP, LRTP, SMART SCALE).

| Task | Description | Timeline |
|---|---|---|
| 6.1 | Define dashboard metrics: fatal and serious injury crash trends, serious injury rates, HIN project pipeline, quick build count and outcomes, equity indicators | Year 1 |
| 6.2 | Establish a Regional Safety Task Force | Years 1–2 |
| 6.3 | Identify data sources and establish data-sharing agreements among localities, VDOT, and emergency services | Years 1–2 |
| 6.4 | Develop dashboard platform (web-based, publicly accessible, updated at least quarterly) | Years 1– 2 |
| 6.5 | Launch dashboard publicly; communicate to media, elected officials, and community partners | Year 2 |
| 6.6 | Publish first annual safety progress report aligned with this plan's action items | Year 2 |
| 6.7 | Develop a framework for community-submitted safety concerns to complement official crash data | Year 2 |
| 6.8 | Embed safety performance metrics into TIP project scoring and LRTP update processes | Years 2–3 |
| 6.9 | Convene annual regional safety review with locality staff, PlanRVA, and stakeholder partners | Year 2, ongoing |
| 6.10 | Publish biennial comprehensive progress report with updated crash trend analysis and action status | Every 2 Years |

**Lead:** PlanRVA
**Support:** Locality planning and engineering departments, VDOT, public health partners, community organizations

# Implementation Phasing at a Glance

| Action | Short-Range (Years 1-2) | Mid-Range (Years 3-4) | Long-Range (Years 5+) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Regional Street Design Manual | Steering committee, engagement, draft typology standards | Finalize, adopt, develop technical assistance resources | Integrate into ordinances and project scoping; periodic update |
| Road Safety Assessment Program | Designate coordinator, develop protocols, pilot community component, launch first assessments | Expand to full annual cycle; publish findings database | Ongoing, institutionalized; annual public reporting |
| Quick Build Kit of Parts | Inventory, develop vetted treatment menu, pilot treatments | Formally adopt; publish web-based library | Rolling updates as treatments are tested and evaluated |
| Quick Build Implementation | Secure funding, select and install first cohort, collect before/after data | Expand annual cycle; advance sites to permanent design | Sustained pipeline; evidence base supports future capital investment |
| Complementary Plans | Inventory existing plans, identify gaps, initiate speed management and lighting work; engage EMS/public health | Advance ADA, land use, and post-crash care coordination | Sustained interagency coordination; integrate into LRTP |
| Safety Dashboard | Define metrics, establish data sharing, build and launch platform | Annual reports; embed in TIP/LRTP scoring | Biennial comprehensive reports; ongoing public accountability |

# Implementation

A plan that identifies problems without sustaining accountability for solutions does not save lives. The actions in this plan are most effective when they are paired with clear structures for oversight, honest mechanisms for measuring progress, and the institutional will to revisit and revise when outcomes fall short of goals. This section describes how the Richmond region will govern and evaluate its commitment to eliminating roadway deaths and serious injuries.

## Oversight

Sustaining progress on regional safety requires a body with the standing to hold agencies accountable, the technical capacity to evaluate implementation, and the community trust to ensure that the plan serves all residents.

To fulfill that function, this plan calls for the establishment of a Regional Safe Streets Task Force. This recommendation was outlined in the 2022 safety plan but never fully implemented.

**Regional Safe Streets Task Force**

- Serves as the primary working group for plan implementation
- Convenes on a regular basis (at minimum quarterly)
- Reviews progress against action timelines
- Identifies barriers, and recommend course corrections as needed
- Membership composed of:
  - local transportation and public works staff
  - representatives from law enforcement and emergency services
  - school representatives
  - public health agencies
  - transit operators
  - planning departments
  - community members

**Operates Under Oversight of**

**RRTPO Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)**

Provides the technical depth and inter-jurisdictional coordination

**Accountable to**

**RRTPO Policy Board**

Ultimate authority for affirming regional priorities and directing resources

This tiered structure (Task Force for working-level accountability, TAC for technical review, and the Policy Board for policy direction) mirrors how the region governs its Long Range Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Program, and reflects the importance of embedding safety oversight within established planning governance rather than treating it as a parallel or improvisational effort.

The Task Force should also maintain a direct channel for community input, ensuring that residents can raise concerns, flag emerging safety issues, and weigh in on whether commitments are being honored. This might take the form of a standing community advisory role within the Task Force, a public comment mechanism tied to annual reporting, or both.

## Measuring Progress

Progress is measured in lives protected, not projects completed. A region can build dozens of projects, issue press releases, and still see no meaningful reduction in fatal and serious injury crashes if the investments are not targeting the right locations, road user types, or systemic conditions. This plan establishes a performance framework grounded in outcomes, with supporting process measures that provide early signals of whether implementation is on track.

**Outcome measures** are the core of accountability. The region's primary goal is to reduce fatal and serious injury crashes (and among vulnerable road users particularly) with a long-term commitment to Vision Zero. Progress against this goal should be reported annually using data from state crash records and, where available, supplemented by locality-level reporting. Trend analysis should be organized by crash type, road user, geography, and demographic indicators to ensure that overall reductions do not mask persistent disparities in which communities bear the heaviest burden of harm.

**Process measures** support early detection of implementation gaps. These include the share of priority actions completed on schedule by timeline tier, the number of road safety audits or quick-build projects delivered, the extent of HIN corridors receiving targeted investment, and the degree to which community engagement commitments are being fulfilled. Process measures should not substitute for outcome measures, but they provide actionable signals before years pass without observable improvement in crash data.

**Reporting** should occur annually, with a public-facing summary released through PlanRVA's website and presented to the TAC and Policy Board. Every five years (aligned with the region's Long Range Transportation Plan update cycle) a more comprehensive review should assess whether the plan's action framework remains adequate, whether targets need revision, and whether new data or emerging safety challenges warrant updated priorities. This update cycle should also create a formal opportunity to integrate feedback from the Regional Safe Streets Task Force and from community members.

Taken together, the oversight structure and performance framework described here are designed to ensure that this plan does not become a static document. The goal is a living accountability system — one that names who is responsible, tracks whether commitments are being kept, and centers the people most at risk in every evaluation of whether the region is making progress.

## Safety Messaging

Infrastructure improvements are the most direct path to eliminating deaths and serious injuries on the region's roads, but physical changes alone cannot build the culture of care that sustains long-term progress. Recognizing this, PlanRVA developed *Safer Together: A Regional Messaging Framework for Safer Streets and Communities* in December 2025 to complement the technical and policy work in this plan. The framework lays out the need for a unified regional identity for safety communication, a shared toolkit that localities can adapt to their own audiences, and a governance structure to coordinate outreach across jurisdictions.

Rather than adding a standalone campaign on top of existing local efforts, *Safer Together* is designed to connect and amplify them, giving the region a consistent voice while preserving the local relevance that makes safety messaging resonate. Its core messages are grounded in crash data and tied to the same priority behaviors (speeding, impairment, distraction, and failure to yield) that the Safe System improvements in this plan are designed to address.

Implementation of the *Safer Together* framework is timed to follow adoption of this plan, with a regional pilot campaign launching in the fall of 2026 and a full evaluation cycle running through 2029. PlanRVA and the RRTPO TAC will coordinate messaging activities, with local governments leading community-level rollout using shared templates and a regional digital asset library. The framework also positions the region to pursue federal and state funding for education and outreach, including DMV safety grants and future SS4A implementation awards. As the region deploys quick build treatments, advances road safety assessments, and develops a regional street design Manual, *Safer Together* will help communities understand why these changes are happening and how they make streets safer for everyone.

## Appendix

The appendices for this report can be found at planrva.org and the Safety Action Plan project page at engage.planrva.org/safety-plan.

Appendices include the following documents, linked here or found on the project page.

- Glossary of Key Terms
- Engagement Report
- Full Survey Results
- Open Ended Comments
- High Injury Network Methodology
- Priority Safety Corridors
- *Safer Together: A Regional Messaging Framework for Safer Streets and Communities*

# Safer Streets, Healthier Communities

## What Safe Streets Mean for Our Communities

### For suburban communities, safe streets mean...

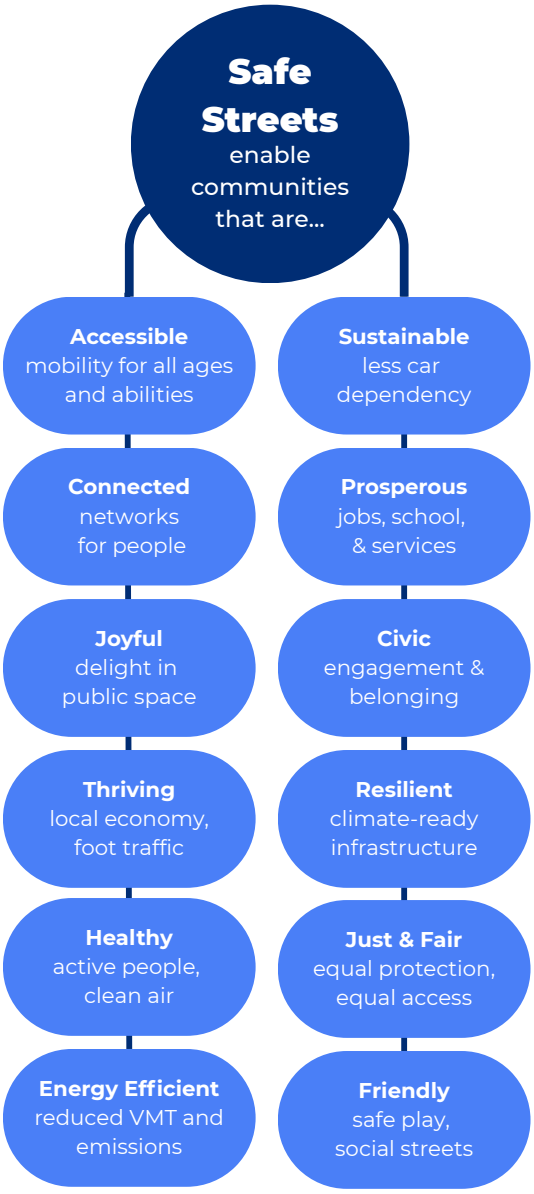
...a mile-long trip to school might no longer require a car. New sidewalks and shared-use paths along high-speed arterials make walking and biking genuinely possible for the first time, building a more **connected** network for people rather than just vehicles. Families driving fewer short trips means less congestion and lower emissions, moving toward something more **sustainable** with less car dependency. And businesses along redesigned corridors that attract more foot traffic find themselves part of a more **prosperous** community supporting more jobs, more services, and more reasons to stay local. Streets designed for people rather than just cars also mean more active daily movement and cleaner air, resulting in a quieter, more **healthy** place to live.

### For urban communities, safe streets mean...

...a 74-year-old neighbor who stopped walking to the pharmacy because a crossing felt like a gamble can make that trip again. Redesigned intersections, curb extensions, and signals timed for people (and not just cars) make streets **accessible** for every age and ability. Slower speeds and protected crossings invite people outside, turning sidewalks and parklets into places of **joyful** delight in public space. Children join bike buses to school through protected corridors, and corner shops see more foot traffic as the neighborhood enjoys a more **thriving** local economy supported by people moving through it on foot. And if a community loses someone at a dangerous intersection and organizes to fix it, **civic** life means engagement, belonging, and shared investment in something that matters.

### For rural communities, safe streets mean...

...kids can get to school without being exposed to 55-mph traffic or boarding a bus on a dangerous road. Paved shoulders, shared-use paths, and pedestrian lanes connecting homes to schools and community centers give families a **friendly** place for safe play and everyday life beyond the car. When a hurricane or ice storm closes the highway, communities with alternate routes to essentials are more **resilient** and less dependent on any single road or fuel source to keep life functioning. Agricultural workers, older residents, and anyone without reliable transportation gain real protection on roads they have no choice but to use while moving toward something more **just and fair**: equal protection, equal access, regardless of where you live. And when people can walk or bike for some of those trips, rather than driving every mile, the whole community becomes more **energy efficient**. This means lower emissions, less fuel burned, and a lighter footprint on the forests, fields, streams, and land.




*The three profiles on this page demonstrate how these safe street principles show up in a given community.*