



Legislation Text

File #: 2024-0206, **Version:** 2

A MOTION endorsing the Safe System approach to achieve the goal of zero traffic deaths and serious injuries in King County; and requesting that the King County executive propose a strategy to develop a coordinated, multiagency safety action plan using the Safe System approach.

WHEREAS, according to the Harborview Injury Prevention and Research Center of the University of Washington, there were eight hundred ten traffic deaths in Washington state in 2023, a ten percent increase since 2022, and the largest number of traffic deaths in the state since 1990, and

WHEREAS, according to the Washington state Traffic Safety Commission, there were one hundred sixty-seven traffic deaths involving motor vehicles in King County during 2023, double the amount recorded in 2014, including a one-hundred-sixty-five-percent increase in pedestrian deaths in King County over the last decade from 20 in 2014 to fifty-three in 2023, and

WHEREAS, according to the King County traffic safety coalition, in 2023, the societal cost of traffic collisions in King County was \$6.7 billion per year, and

WHEREAS, according to Smart Growth America's Dangerous by Design 2024 report, Black and Native Americans, older adults, and people walking in low-income communities die at higher rates and face higher levels of risk when using our nation's streets, and

WHEREAS, both the adopted 2012 King County Comprehensive Plan, as amended, and the proposed King County Comprehensive Plan, to be adopted under Proposed Ordinance 2023-0440, state as a goal that King County should maintain safe and secure county-owned infrastructure, including roads, bridges, trails, buses, passenger ferries, and transit and ferry facilities, and

WHEREAS, the Vision Zero strategy, which was developed in Europe in the 1990s and is now used worldwide, aims to eliminate all traffic fatalities and severe injuries, while increasing safety, health, and equitable mobility for all, and

WHEREAS, at the federal level, the U.S. Department of Transportation has adopted the Vision Zero goal to strive to eliminate fatal and serious injuries for all road users, and is implementing the Safe System approach to achieve that goal, and

WHEREAS, the Safe System approach is founded on the principles that humans make mistakes, that human bodies have limited ability to tolerate crash impacts, and that those mistakes should never lead to death, and

WHEREAS, applying the Safe System approach involves anticipating human mistakes by designing and managing roadway infrastructure to keep the risk of a mistake low, and when a mistake leads to a crash that the impact on the human body doesn't result in a fatality or serious injury, which requires a focus on safe vehicles, safe speeds, safe roads, safe road users, and postcrash care to make roadways safer for all users, and

WHEREAS, at the state level, the Washington state Department of Transportation in coordination with the Washington state Traffic Safety Commission has developed a Strategic Highway Safety Plan that includes the goal of reducing the number of traffic deaths and serious injuries on Washington's roadways to zero by 2030, and

WHEREAS, at the regional level, the Puget Sound Regional Council has launched a multi-year effort to develop a regional safety action plan using the Safe System approach to improve traffic safety in the central Puget Sound region and achieve the state's long-term goal of zero deaths and serious injuries in a comprehensive, data-informed, equitable, and collaborative way, and to complement the development of local safety action plans by individual counties and cities, and

WHEREAS, to support the Vision Zero goal, the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021 established the Safe Streets and Roads for All grant program, with five billion dollars in grant funds available to

support regional, local, and Tribal initiatives to prevent roadway deaths and serious injuries through the Safe System approach, and

WHEREAS, in 2023 the Puget Sound Regional Council was awarded nearly eight million dollars through two grants from the federal Safe Streets and Roads for All grant program to support the development of the regional safety plan, as well as local safety plans for the cities of Bonney Lake, Burien, Eatonville, Edmonds, Everett, Federal Way, Fife, Kent, Kirkland, Redmond, Renton, Shoreline, Sultan, and Tukwila, and for Pierce and Snohomish counties, and

WHEREAS, in 2023 the roads services division of King County's local services department received a grant of eight hundred thousand dollars from the federal Safe Streets and Roads for All grant program to develop a comprehensive road safety action plan for the one thousand five hundred miles of roads and one hundred eighty-five bridges in unincorporated King County that are managed by the roads services division, and

WHEREAS, in addition to managing roads and bridges in unincorporated King County through the roads services division, King County also operates other services and facilities through which people or vehicles interact with traffic throughout both incorporated and unincorporated King County, including through the Metro transit department, which operates public transportation services, the King County sheriff's office, which provides traffic enforcement, the parks and recreation division of the department of natural resources and parks, which develops and operates the recreation and active transportation system on King County's regional trails network, Public Health - Seattle & King County, which coordinates the King County traffic safety coalition and other public health initiatives related to people's use of transportation and the built environment, and the fleet services division of the department of executive services, which manages the operations of King County's fleet vehicles, and

WHEREAS, King County does not manage or operate roadways or the built environment within incorporated cities, but an increasing number of cities within the county have adopted Vision Zero goals or are

developing local safety plans using the Safe System approach, including the cities of Bellevue, Burien, Covington, Federal Way, Issaquah, Kenmore, Kent, Kirkland, Lake Forest Park, Redmond, Renton, Seattle, Shoreline, and Tukwila, and

WHEREAS, because the impacts of King County's operations related to traffic safety extend beyond the operations of the roads services division, it is essential that King County develop a multi-agency safety action plan using the Safe System approach to coordinate traffic safety initiatives being implemented by King County departments, the King County traffic safety coalition, the Puget Sound Regional Council, local jurisdictions, and stakeholder organizations, to achieve the goal of zero traffic deaths and serious injuries in King County, and

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that the King County executive coordinate the development of this multi-agency safety action plan using the Safe System approach;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

A. King County endorses the Safe System approach to achieve the goal of zero traffic fatalities and serious injuries in King County.

B. The council requests that the King County executive, working with King County departments, the King County traffic safety coalition, Puget Sound Regional Council, local jurisdictions, and stakeholder organizations, propose a strategy to develop a coordinated, multiagency safety action plan using the Safe System approach, including, but not limited to, information about the proposed scope, budget, timeline, and resources needed to develop the safety action plan, as well as a proposed date by which King County would strive to achieve zero traffic deaths and serious injuries in King County.

C. The executive should electronically file a description of the proposed strategy to develop a coordinated, multiagency safety action plan using the Safe System approach no later than January 30, 2025, with the clerk of the council, who shall retain the original and provide an electronic copy to all councilmembers, the council chief of staff, the chief policy officer, and the

lead staff for the committee of the whole, or its successor.