

Atlanta Vision Zero Action Plan

June In-Person Community Workshop

Date and Time: June 22, 2023, 5:30 PM – 7:30 PM

Location: Hillside International Truth Center
450 Cascade Road, SW, Atlanta, GA 30311

I. Workshop Overview

The In-Person Community Workshop was held at the Hillside International Truth Center, located in NPU S. The Workshop was hosted by the Atlanta Department of Transportation (ATLDOT) and the Action Plan consultant team: Toole Design Group (Toole), VHB, and Blue Cypress Consulting. The goals of the Workshop were: 1) to provide updates on the Action Plan progress to date, 2) to collect testimonials from community members, 3) to discuss desires for safer streets, and 4) to promote accountability through a safety pledge. Fifteen community members attended the workshop.

Meeting Flow

1. Sign-In Table
2. Participate in Self-Paced Input Activities and Review Data (15 minutes)
3. Presentation (15 minutes)
4. Group Discussion (45 minutes)
5. Action Steps

II. Workshop Summary

Self-Paced Input Activities

1) Where do you live and work?

As shown in Figure 1, the workshop brought participants who live and work in different parts of the city. Four red dots (denoting places of employment) were concentrated on Cascade Road.

2) How do you travel around Atlanta?

This input activity (illustrated in Figure 2) asked participants to respond to the following questions. The answer choices and responses are listed below:

- How did you get here today?
 - I walked or rolled (0)
 - I biked, scooted, or skateboarded (1)
 - I took public transit (3)
 - I drove a car or motor vehicle (7)
- How do you usually get around?
 - I walk or roll (4)
 - I bike, scoot, or skateboard (4)
 - I take public transit (4)
 - I drive a car or motor vehicle (6)
- How do you use Atlanta's streets?
 - Gathering with friends and neighbors (6)
 - Traveling (9)
 - Exercising (4)
 - Playing (1)

Figure 1. Where do you live and work?

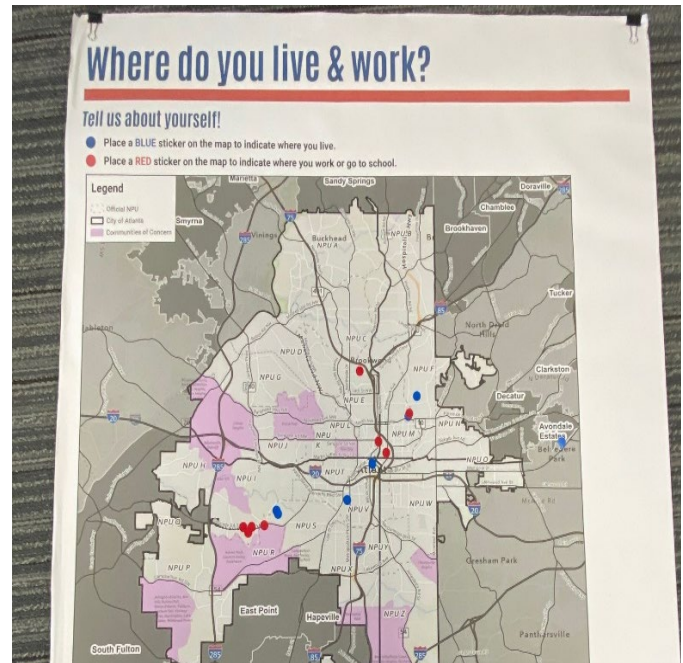
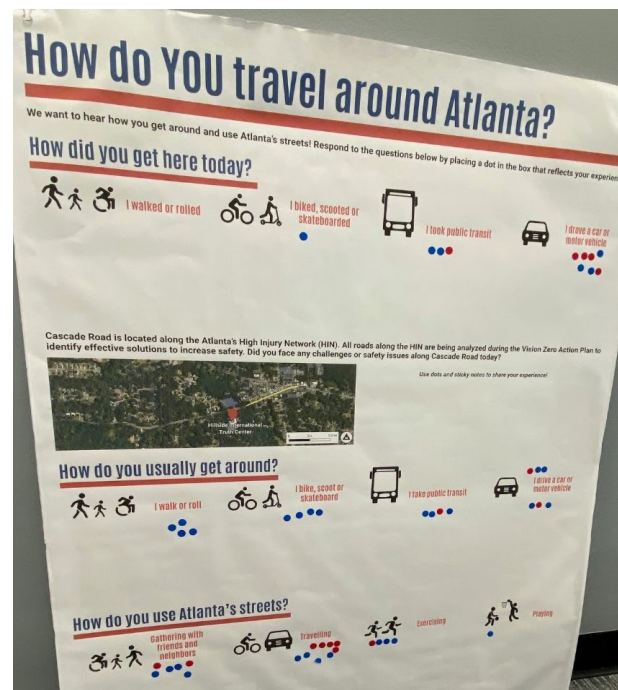


Figure 2. How do you travel around Atlanta?



3) Community Input Map

An online Community Input Map has been open since February 2023 to solicit community feedback on unsafe roadway conditions in Atlanta. Four boards (one for each quadrant of Atlanta) highlighted locations where survey respondents to date have been hit or know someone who was hit by a vehicle. A few pictures submitted through the online map, along with their associated comments, were also included on these boards.

Workshop participants were encouraged to share additional input either by adding a pin to the physical boards or by using the provided tablets to participate via the online Community Input Map. On the southwest Atlanta board, one participant added a note that pointed to the location on Cascade Road where Hillside International Truth Center is located. The comment stated: "blind curve, steep slope, transit corridor."

4) Testimonial Cards

Four testimonial cards were submitted, and one participant recorded a video testimonial. These stories are transcribed below. The project team did not make any content adjustments; the text is copied directly from the original testimonial cards aside from a couple minor spelling corrections.

- a) Story 1: At the corner of Cascade Rd + Beecher Rd, cars speed through the intersection to make the light or to bypass another car. In doing so the intersection bears an elevated number of car accidents. Our fear is that some swerve their car to avoid an accident and hits a pedestrian or a building. We request at minimum a 4 way stop or poles to protect those on standing on sidewalks.
- b) Story 2: 2 Fatality on Cascade Rd at Spring Park Subdivision. Dates: Feb 10, 2016, 1:07 p.m. and Dec 22, 2018, 1:38 a.m. Both fatalities involved collisions w/ Marta Busses.
- c) Story 3: #1 – Safety for citizens – communities of northwest and southwest Atlanta. Hedgewood Drive + Linkwood – speeders through the Westhaven Community; at Burton Road, the new speed humps has shifted Hedgewood as a cut-through; dangerous. The intergenerational culture of Grand Theft Auto Drivers vs. Traditionalists needs to be studied regarding driving. Behaviors and patterns to support safety. During major traffic delays; after major events the community is used as a "cut through" – "short cuts" – bottlenecks our streets. Biggest challenges to Vision Zero: regulation of tractor trailers. Moving through communities – side streets. Making arteries and neighborhood streets walking friendly with sidewalks and bike lanes. Speed humps in communities off major arteries. Get cameras! Issue tickets – attach to getting tags in GA. Have major companies (CSX) contribute to safety and beautification of spaces. Keep America Beautiful Campaign – re-establish. Incorporate more plans similar to the MLKing Corridor project – from Westlake moving towards downtown. Tell the true narrative of our "walking" community. {not just invisible communities}
- d) Story 4: I primarily navigate the city by bike, both for personal reasons and for work. Often, I feel that cycling is the "wrong" choice, even when there is dedicated LIT infrastructure.

Maintenance of that infrastructure often doesn't feel like a priority, the lanes are not always reliably useable (i.e., a car parked in a bike lane), and drivers' behavior can feel hostile. I've seen the years of planning and can see so many folks truly do care, but the City as a civic institution has to start caring.

5) Data Boards

The project team shared information analyzed through the Action Plan process to date. These boards covered the following:

1. Communities of Concern
2. High Injury Network
3. Systemic Analysis – Vulnerable Road Users and Intersections
4. Systemic Analysis – Motor Vehicle Related

Vision Zero Action Plan Status Presentation

Chris Puglisi (Toole) welcomed the audience and provided an overview of the agenda. He then introduced the project team and gave Cole Smith the floor to introduce himself as the new ATLDOT Vision Zero Manager. Cole discussed his excitement to serve in his new role.

Betty Smoot-Madison (ATLDOT) explained the City's methodology for identifying Communities of Concern. She discussed that this is the framework for the Action Plan's equity-based engagement approach, and it will also be used during the project prioritization and selection process.

Group Discussion

Andy Clarke (Toole) facilitated a group discussion about the impacts of traffic violence and how we can accomplish Vision Zero among all community members and members of the project team in attendance. Community members passed around a microphone to share their stories and ideas, and the project team recorded notes on flipcharts.

Discussion Prompts

Where are we now?

- How has traffic violence impacted your life, harmed you, or harmed a loved one?
- What do you think is the biggest challenge, or what is your biggest idea, to achieve Vision Zero?

Where are we going?

- What about our culture needs to change to achieve Vision Zero?
- What do you want to see in the future?

Discussion Summary

Topics brought forth during the discussion are summarized below.

Biggest Challenges

- The intersection of Cascade Road, Beecher Road, and Benjamin E. Mays is viewed as a nuisance. Cars typically fly through the intersection, and there are near misses two to three times per day. The intersection desperately needs a four-way stop. One person asked, ***“Does someone have to die there before the City takes action?”***
- State roads and city roads co-existing and coordinating.
- Betty spoke about change needing time. We’re not going to reach zero overnight.
- On-street parking doesn’t work with Vision Zero. Cars are always parked in bike lanes and are never cited or fined.
- How can we expect people to begin traveling by foot or bike?
- Through-traffic (cars and trains) and its impact on keeping communities clean and respected.

Culture Today

- Crashes occur every day.
- Bike lanes are new to this side of town.
- Need to address the needs of intergenerational population. Also need to do something about the “Grand Theft Auto” mindset of youths.
- Cars keep getting larger. Commercials also encourage speed and misbehavior.
- How can we ensure that traffic enforcement does not have racial biases? There is a lot of over policing and escalation in our culture. WE need to identify when enforcement is required and by whom to prevent it from disproportionately impacting Black and Brown community members.
- Deprived of pedestrian space – we don’t think about people walking and biking.
- People don’t like to stop or be bottlenecked. This happens constantly on Cascade near Firehouse Café.

Hazards

- Trash receptacles are important to keep hazards out of the roadway.
- Potholes
- Cars in the bike lane
- Blind turns
- High speeds
- Cars that do not follow new road patterns (stop signs)
- Lack of visibility (yellow/green road signs)
- Cars interfering with sidewalks

Impacts

- There is a lot of green space in this area (near Cascade Road), but there are no sidewalks to access these green spaces.
- Dislocated shoulders

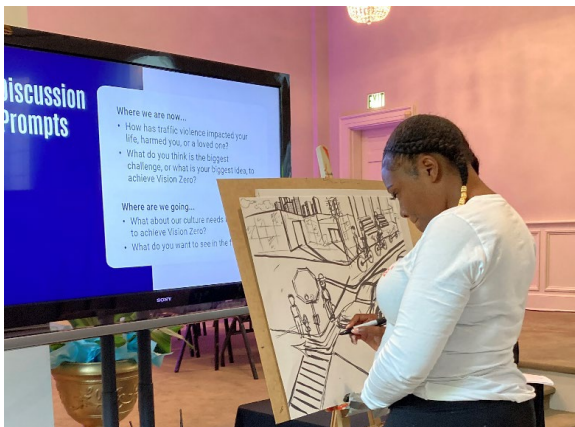
- Change routines
- Health Insurance and workers' comp
- Deaths – people and cars hit by bus
- Property damage: vehicles, signs, mailboxes
- Trauma

Opportunities and Future Vision

- Everyone plays a role. Safe streets also help meet other goals.
- Walking Tours: get people on the streets to experience speed, sidewalks, amenities, and comfort.
- Encourage the people we know to change and be aware.
- Design streets differently for the size of vehicles to increase visibility.
- Communities where people slow down and see us.
- Connectivity to neighborhoods and schools! Sidewalks to greenspaces. Equitable prioritization of community investments to improve historically derived areas of the city.
- See all people on the streets (not just men). Improved safety so people can live how they want.
- Need more awareness, such as blinking lights
- Change roadways so that vehicles cannot speed. Narrow roads (reduce number of lanes), add speed humps, etc.
- Where an intervention is working, let us repeat it elsewhere. MLK Drive is a great example of a successful project. It improved safety by reducing the number of lanes from four to two.

Sketch Artist

Ashley Bella of Artzy Bella Studio, located in East Point, joined the workshop to provide an artistic representation of the themes that were expressed in the group discussion. She produced two sketches, depicting many of the key discussion points: feeling invisible, the need for community investment, the vital components of safer streets such as bike lanes and stop signs, and more.



Ashley Bella sketched during the group discussion, and she shared the themes that inspired her.

Action Step: Safety Pledge

Community members signed the pledge banner to commit to doing their part to contribute to safer streets.

Figure 3. Pledge Banner

