



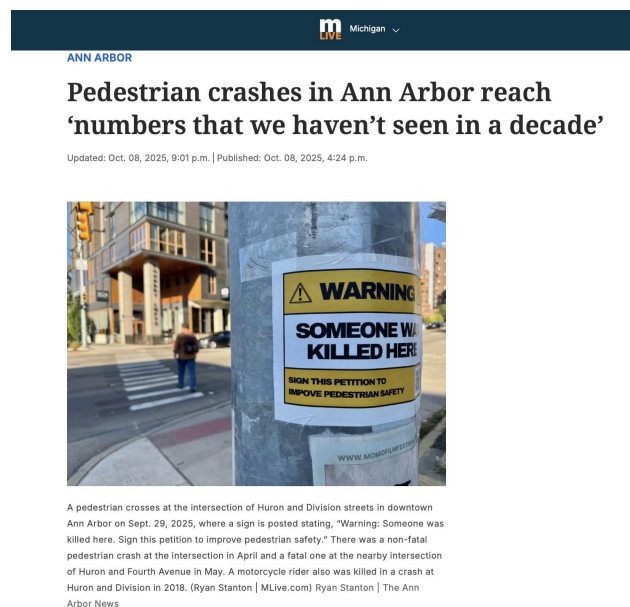
Action alert: The wheels are coming off the Vision Zero bus (again)



Summary

Email your city council reps (find them [here](#)) with a cc: to all of council (citycouncil@a2gov.org) and express any or all of these thoughts if they resonate with you:

1. "Your stance on safe streets and Vision Zero was a major reason I voted for you and will be a major criteria when I vote for future candidates."
2. "I am concerned that the consultants that are working on the "roadway rightsizing" project and the North Main project are not abiding by your commitment to Vision Zero. Instead, they are pitting criteria like 'congestion' and 'tolerance for delay' against safety — when these must be *completely secondary* to safety. Will you correct the direction of these projects?"
3. "Will you commit to using the [\\$500k in funds for 'quick build' projects](#) — that has been available since May — before December 31 on one or more high-priority multilane corridors? If not by December, then when and on what?" (Express your preference for a dangerous corridor that concerns you. Hundreds of people have signed a [petition asking them to do this on Stadium Boulevard](#) — you can add your name if you would like — but other roads like Packard or Green would also be acceptable. The fact that winter is approaching should not be an excuse for failing to do a safety pilot now; temporary paint and flexposts can be installed year-round. We cannot wait years for projects to come out of the new batch of studies. Pilot projects must happen now!)
4. "Please reply with your stance on these issues as soon as possible." (Please let me know how they respond).
5. If you do not receive a satisfactory answer to your questions, *let's work on recruiting city council candidates who will uphold our community's commitment to safety.*



See also [this article](#) that summarized these requests

By request, Hannah Stanton-Gockel and I made videos about the situation. The first two are backgrounders, and the third quotes clips of the Toole Design consultant meeting and demonstrates how this process is going off the rails:

1. Background (4 minutes) [YouTube](#) or [TikTok](#)
2. Background slideshow (1 minute) [TikTok](#)
3. Reaction to/analysis of consultant meeting (10 minutes) [YouTube](#) or [TikTok](#)

Background

As many of you know, when I was on city council ten years ago, we decided as a community that Ann Arbor should not tolerate any deaths and serious injuries on our roads, a commitment known as Vision Zero. We promised to end serious traffic crashes by 2025.

Vision Zero is not one of those “nice to aspire to” goals that are scattered through city plans and resolutions. There are many cities that have eliminated deaths on their roads, and this was a realistic commitment by all accounts. Below is an excerpt from our current Transportation Plan.

What is Vision Zero?

Vision Zero is both the commitment and the approach to eliminating death and serious injury from traffic crashes. Vision Zero puts forward a new vision for safety that differs significantly from traditional approaches and recognizes that:

Safe mobility is a basic right.

Everyone has the right to walk, bike, take public transit, and drive on streets that are safe for everyone, regardless of who they are or where they live.

Traffic crashes are preventable.

By changing how we design, use, and view our streets, we can make them safer for everyone.

Humans make mistakes.

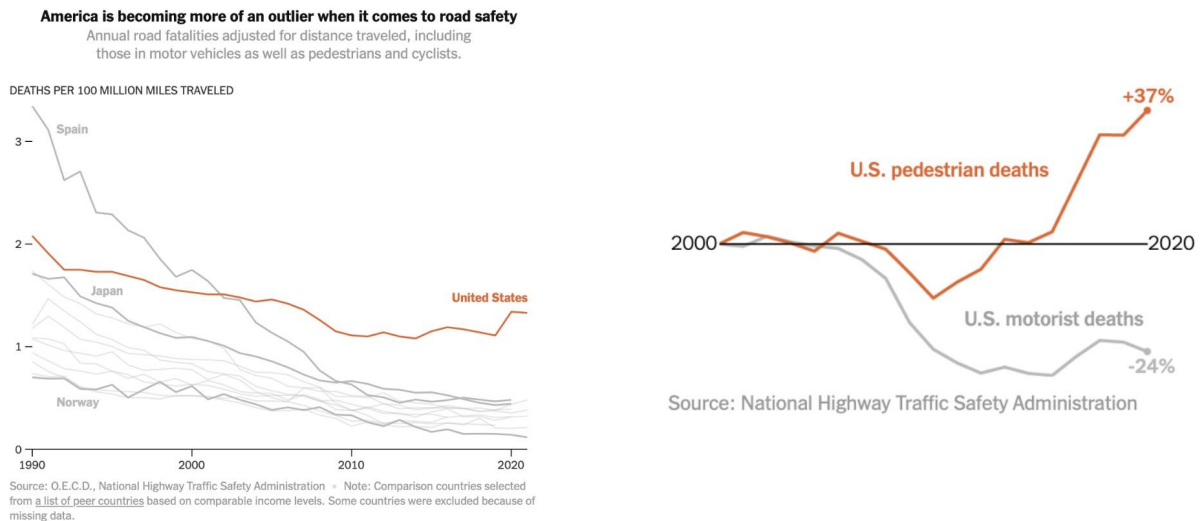
Our streets and policies should be designed so that when people make inevitable mistakes while driving, they don't result in injury or death.

Safety is a shared responsibility.

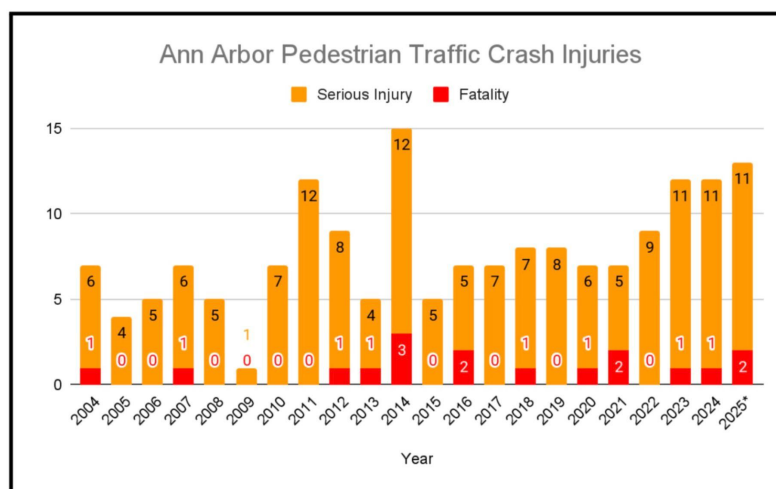
Vision Zero requires action on many levels, and a diverse partnership of community members, city staff, and stakeholders are necessary to carry out those actions and hold each other accountable.

I take responsibility for our failure to make progress during my time on council. I trusted that “traffic engineers” could improve safety significantly. I was wrong, and my mistake caused immeasurable suffering to victims of traffic injuries and their families.

Since then, I have learned a lot more about why the United States is an extreme outlier when it comes to traffic danger: it’s because the American style of traffic engineering was never about safety for anyone outside of a car.



Our city is not immune from this national tragedy. This year, 2025, is the deadline we gave ourselves and promised the community we would achieve Vision Zero. We haven’t merely failed: 2025 is now the most dangerous year to be a pedestrian in Ann Arbor since Vision Zero was declared — and the year isn’t even over yet.

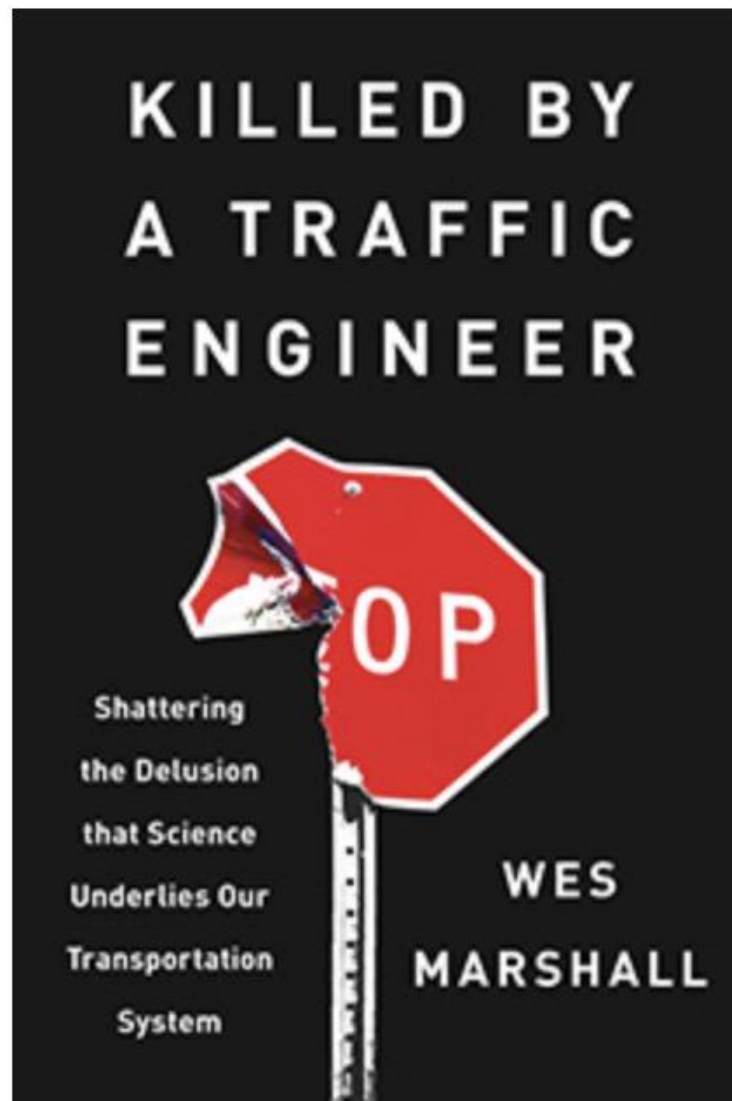


The number of serious and fatal pedestrian traffic crashes on the non-interstate highways and streets of Ann Arbor from 2004 to 2025. Data source for 2004 to 2024 is www.michigantrafficcrashfacts.org ⁽³⁾. *2025 data is based on AAPD crash reports ⁽⁵⁾.

Graphic from crashesinannarbor.org

The current city council, and every city council leading up to it, shares responsibility for our failure and the lives it has claimed. Every year of this decade has consisted of new plans, committees, reports, half-measure attempts, “re-affirmations” of Vision Zero, budget amendments, countless staff and volunteer hours, and promises of “quick build” improvements that take years to install or don’t happen at all; each *new thing* bringing a glimmer of hope that *this time, something will go differently*. It has not.

Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me 10 times? Multiplied across almost every city in the country for the past 100 years, such that our road death rates are now 3-7x those of all our peers? There's no doubt now that American “traffic engineering” is a failed profession at best. (I strongly recommend this book.)



Current situation

Two years ago, we succeeded in lobbying the city council to come up with actual [redesign solutions for multilane roads](#), the most dangerous roads in the city. There was an acknowledgement that multilane roads (4+ lanes) were only 7% of the city's roads yet caused 40% of serious crashes. This is because they're too wide and fast; wide roads create speeding cars, the antithesis to Vision Zero. These roads must be narrowed in order to be slower, and the study is supposed to determine ways to do this.

Two years and dozens more injuries later, the city has finally hired a consultant and started the process. There are two corridor safety studies happening (Ann Arbor Roadway Rightsizing aka "A2R2" and a study on North Main St, in the hopes the state will transfer it to us). These studies offer a once-in-a-decade opportunity to make overdue safety fixes on our most dangerous roads. The consultant that is handling both of these studies, Toole Design, is taking a slightly more modern approach than we've previously seen from city staff or consultants.

But "better" is not Vision Zero. These multi-lane corridors must be made *completely* safe, and we need to be working on other deadly roads in our community at the same time. NOW. Even if we solved multi-lane tragedies tomorrow, while we'd be much better off, we would still need years to make fixes on other roads to become truly safe.

The consultant is either ignorant of — or incapable of fulfilling — the city's commitment to eliminate traffic violence on the roads they are analyzing. They literally said they intend to present "choices" and "tradeoffs" between fast car traffic and other "benefits." But the city already chose: Vision Zero means safety first, not safety-if-it's-convenient. We cannot allow that commitment to be diluted or debated away.

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Before this project's direction is set in stone, councilmembers need to hear from residents demanding a true Vision Zero approach. Please email them now and tell them you're a road safety voter — someone who expects leaders to uphold their promise to eliminate traffic deaths and serious injuries, beginning with the rightsizing and North Main projects. Allowing these projects to continue in their current direction will cost lives, waste millions, and set us back another decade.

"Quick" build?

And there's still no word on the \$500,000 that we all lobbied to be used for "quick build" road safety projects. This is inexcusable. City council is demonstrating that they are either unable or unwilling to direct staff to implement safety improvement pilots on an urgent basis.