

Hello. My name is Maria Cantrell – Vision Zero Coordinator for the City of Columbus.

Vision Zero is a global and national movement to eliminate fatal and serious injury traffic crashes. To do so, we must change the status quo of how transportation systems work to prioritize **safety** over everything else. Over perceptions of efficiency or convenience, THE number one priority must be ensuring that everyone arrives to their destination safely.

In 2020, 80 people were killed in traffic crashes in Columbus. Hundreds were seriously injured. The youngest killed was only 16 months old. The amount of lives lost has increased by about 10% each year. If this trend continues, next year we will be talking about **90** friends, family members, and loved ones no longer with us.

It is evident that something needs to change to affect the outcomes of unnecessary loss of life due to this traffic violence.

Most of these crashes are preventable. They are not random acts of nature. And change is possible. With Vision Zero we are rethinking the way we design roads so that they are more forgiving when people make mistakes or bad choices. But this won't be enough.

We need the public to be a part of the solution and be an active partner to reduce serious injuries and fatalities on our roadways. Part of that is passing common sense laws that hold people accountable for their actions and that encourages them to put down their phone when driving. It's not just for their safety, but for those around them. We've all seen serious crashes that were preventable, no matter the setting- people in rural, suburban or urban environments all face the life changing impacts of a distracted driver.

In the development of our Vision Zero plan, we surveyed the public with nearly 1600 responses. When asked which of these traffic safety issues were most important to address:

- impairment
- speeding,
- road rage,
- failure to yield,
- running red lights, or
- distracted driving

DISTRACTED DRIVING was by far their greatest concern. And YET 87% of those same anonymous respondents admitted to using a handheld device while traveling. Everyone knows it's not safe, and yet still does so. Why? – we lack accountability.

It's time to implement change. The consequence of inaction is loss of life. Vision Zero and the City of Columbus implore you to support this Ohio Distracted Driving Legislation.