



Staff Analysis

Complete Streets Policies & Transportation Safety Snapshot

Presented by:

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CITY OF GAINESVILLE STAFF ANALYSIS

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Title: Overview of Complete Streets Policies & Transportation Safety Snapshot

Sponsor: Public Works Department

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Summary of Issue

On June 22, 2017 the General Policy Committee received a presentation from staff about transportation safety issues in the City under the auspices of Vision Zero and complete streets strategies. The committee requested additional information and recommendations from staff about how to move forward. One of the steps currently underway that will assist with the advancement of this effort is the creation of a new City of Gainesville Department of Mobility that will improve coordination of initiatives, and help advance the implementation of programs, services, and technologies to enhance connectivity, mobility and safety.

History/Background Information

Staff evaluated crash data within City limits for the period between 2012 and 2016, focusing on crashes that resulted in fatalities or severe injuries. During the study period there were 18,661 crashes recorded, of which 46 resulted in fatalities and 548 resulted in severe injuries. Figure 1 and Figure 2 provide a snapshot of the crashes; Figure 3 depicts the density of crashes by location.

Pedestrians were involved in approximately 2% of the total crashes but represented 24% of the overall fatalities and 12% of the overall severe injuries. Bicyclists were involved in approximately 2% of the total crashes but represented 7% of the overall fatalities and 9% of the overall severe injuries. Fatal and severe crashes occurred predominantly along major corridors where the travel speeds and traffic volumes are higher. Approximately 70% of overall fatal crashes and 30% of overall severe injury crashes occurred under dark conditions; the incidence at night is higher for crashes involving pedestrians with 82% of fatal crashes and 65% of severe injury crashes occurring under dark conditions.

Compared to 31 other Florida cities with population over 75,000, Gainesville ranks #6 in the incidence of traffic fatalities and severe injuries related to distracted driving, impaired driving and occupant protection; #8 in the number of severe injuries and deaths, and #9 in the incidence of motorcycle crashes.

Figure 1: Overall Crashes

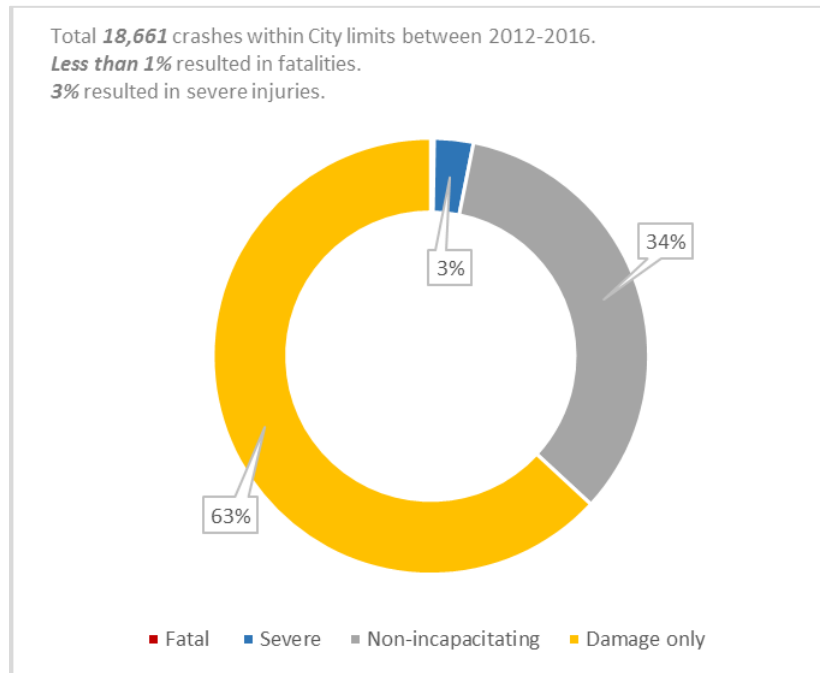


Figure 2: Traffic Related Fatalities and Severe Injuries

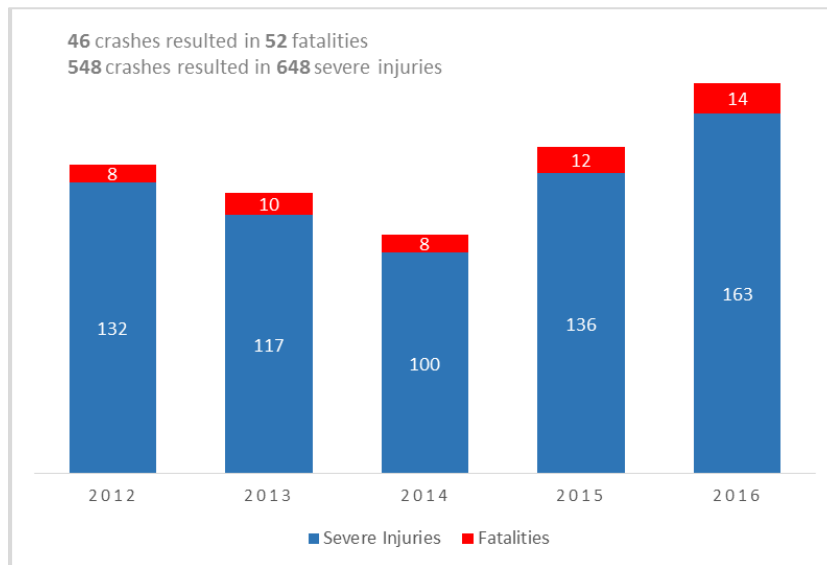
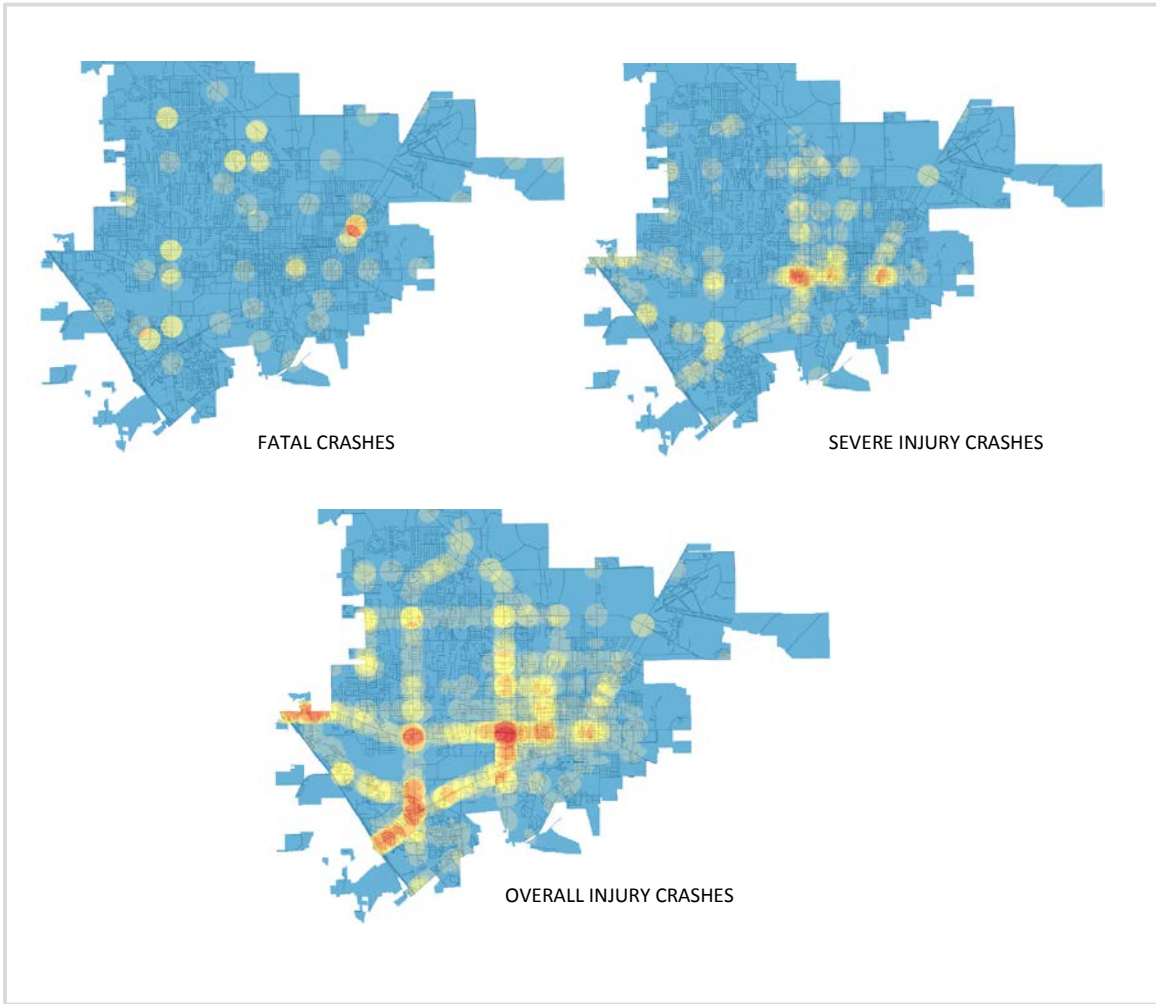


Figure 3: Density of Crashes by Location (2012-2016)



Vision Zero focuses on implementation of modifications to the public realm, policies and technologies to influence the transportation behavior of residents to decrease the incidence of deaths and severe injuries. Key points of Vision Zero strategies include a holistic, multi-disciplinary approach to identify issues and solutions; focus on engineering and technology; speed management; strong leadership; and, community engagement.

PROPOSED STRATEGIES:

To date staff has worked with a diverse group with representation from the Community, Gainesville Police Department; the University of Florida Police Department, Transportation & Parking Department, and Planning & Facilities Department; the Florida Department of Transportation; the Alachua County Health Department; and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board, seeking to develop a holistic approach to the local issues. The following is a list of proposed recommendations:

1. Engineering & Technology:
 - a. Enhance visibility of pedestrian phase at signals by installing external lighting at pedestrian signal heads alerting approaching motorists of the presence of pedestrians in the crosswalks;
 - b. Expand implementation of leading pedestrian intervals;
 - c. Expand installation of midblock signal actuated crossings;
 - d. Reduce speed limits in areas with high bicycle and pedestrian activity;
 - e. Enhance street lighting;
 - f. Implement pilot projects/designs to reduce conflicts between vehicles and bicycles and pedestrians;
 - g. Enhance coordination with UF campus infrastructure; for example there are several locations where bicycle facilities do not continue beyond campus boundaries into the City and vice-versa;
 - h. Implement technologies to enhance data collection (i.e., vehicle to infrastructure data sharing; automated counters; bike/ped counts; etc); this will help inform the decision-making process for the allocation of funding and implementation of education and engineering measures;
 - i. Continue application of complete streets and context sensitive solutions.

2. Enforcement:
 - a. The Gainesville Police Department proposes to pursue automated speed enforcement seeking to increase compliance. Speeding is a major contributing factor to the severity of crashes. The efforts may also include automated camera enforcement at signals.
 - b. Pursue distracted driving enforcement. Several communities have enacted regulation that make distracted driving a primary offense; in Gainesville it is

currently a secondary offense. In some instances, such as in Honolulu, HI there was legislation recently enacted to prohibit texting while crossing the road in an effort to decrease fatalities and severe injuries. While this is not one of the current recommendations at this time, it is worth noting and monitoring its effects over time as distractions such as this may lead to a severe crash.

Pursuit of these initiatives would require a change in City ordinances and lobbying efforts to pursue legislative action at the State level. Staff also suggests working with the National League of Cities to get additional support for these initiatives which are a shared concern among municipalities.

- c. Coordinate with the University of Florida Police Department and Transportation & Parking Department to evaluate the feasibility of tying enforcement of helmet laws for those under the age of 21 to the issuance of parking permits for scooters/motorcycles. This should encourage use of the protective devices resulting in a decrease in the severity of injuries.

3. Education and Outreach:

- a. Develop a Gainesville Vision Zero website;
- b. Develop a traffic safety series with GPD;
- c. Support and/or partner with local advocacy groups to share safety messages and support education efforts; i.e., BPAB is working with the Sheriff to create and air a safety campaign on radio stations; the Gainesville Cycling Club developed a cycling education program that could be sponsored by the City;
- d. Develop a high profile / high impact campaign using known local figures to voice or appear on ads; i.e., famous brain surgeon or UF coach. This idea was suggested by Shands representatives at the Healthy Communities Coalition led by the Alachua County Health Department;
- e. Launch a near miss survey to obtain complementary information about potentially hazardous locations;
- f. Use a multi-media platform to enhance reach of the information; reach out to neighborhood organizations;
- g. Target education campaigns by time of year/themes;
- h. Consider wrapping controller boxes at strategic locations to alert pedestrians about the importance of being alert and cautious similar to the installations in Jacksonville, FL by FDOT.

4. Leadership:

- a. Develop a local policy that outlines the vision and goals, indicating a local commitment to the program;

- b. Enhance lobbying efforts seeking to promote legislative action at the State level that would support local efforts;
- c. In the future we will come back to the Commission with further details on:
 - i. Designating a City coordinator or lead staff person to advance the program. There are many facets covered by different departments and agencies; a designated lead would help guide the development and implementation of action plans, facilitate communication of efforts among the different agencies, lead and/or facilitate periodic joint meetings, and track results;
 - ii. Funding for implementation.

5. Focus Area:

It is recommended that the efforts be initially focused on the area immediately surrounding the University of Florida campus where there is a high incidence of crashes (19% of all fatalities and 22% of all severe injuries occurred adjacent to campus) and along Waldo Rd. Staff would work with FDOT to seek reduction of speed limits along Archer Rd, SW 34th St, W University Ave and SW 13th St adjacent to campus, and Waldo Rd. There is a high concentration of pedestrian and cyclist activity along these corridors and the conflicts between vehicular traffic and pedestrians and cyclists can be expected to increase as the surrounding area continues to develop and increase in density. Staff proposes to target the implementation of the enforcement initiatives along this area as well as the pilot installations of engineering and technology measures. The other efforts outlined are global and would have an effect citywide.

OTHER PLANNED EFFORTS:

There are several efforts currently underway to address the conditions identified:

1. Waldo Rd corridor: there is a high incidence of crashes along Waldo Rd. The FDOT conducted a safety study that culminated with the funding of an enhancement of street lighting along the corridor from E University Ave to NE 39th Ave. The project is currently under design, with approximately \$4 million allocated for implementation in FY20;
2. Waldo Rd at E University Ave: there are concerns about the conflicts between vehicular traffic and pedestrians and cyclists at this location. It is identified as a priority project in the [MTPO List of Priority Projects](#), Table 1, currently unfunded. The [2015 SR26/University Ave Multimodal Emphasis Corridor Study](#) conducted by the MTPO identified site modifications to address the safety concerns; there may be an opportunity to apply for a FDOT grant for this location under the Transportation Alternatives grant program for FY24;

3. Archer Rd from SW 34th St to SW 16th Ave: there is a concern about the volume of pedestrian crossings along the corridor at undesignated locations given the distance between traffic signals. The need for installation of pedestrian actuated midblock crossings has been identified. This project is also identified as a priority project in the [MTPO List of Priority Projects](#), Table 1, currently unfunded. The City submitted a grant application in 2016 for the same grant opportunity identified under item 2 above, the status of the application is currently unknown;
4. University Ave between W 13th St and Gale Lemerand Dr: similar to items 2 and 3 above this location is also a MTPO unfunded priority project for the intallation of midblock crossings at NW 16th St and NW 19th St, as well as the construction of a multimodal trail along the south side. The City and the University of Florida submitted a grant application for the FDOT Transportation Alternatives program in 2015 that was not funded. In recent meetings, FDOT staff has indicated that there have been additional evaluations of the midblock crossings proposed and FDOT is considering the installation of full traffic signals at the two intersections; the timing for installation is currently unknown;
5. SW 34th St between University Ave and SW 2nd Ave: FDOT has funded the implementation of traffic operations improvements at this location in FY20 to address safety concerns; the project may include signal and lane assignment modifications. Other modifications such as additional advanced warning signage have been installed over the past year.

In addition, the proposed Department of Mobility will seek to:

- Address increasing demands for more citizen friendly and technology oriented transportation alternatives;
- Enhance mobility and have reliable, predictable trips for residents or in the movement of their goods;
- Improve the critical relationship between the City's multi-modal transportation system and City's economic vitality;
- Address the impact of transportation-related decisions affecting the environment and other City services as a whole;
- Coordinate current and future innovative transportation services and products through an integrated Transportation system in conjunction with other City services;
- Explore how we can improve transit service delivery through enhanced bus shelters and increased bus service in targeted areas;
- Coordinate City and UF strategic initiatives in relation to transportation solutions, including technology transportation projects.

Options

- A. Discuss safety trends and Vision Zero strategies and direct staff to proceed with further development of initiatives.

Pros Targeted efforts to increase transportation system safety.

Cons None; funding source is needed to expedite the evaluation and for implementation of recommended actions.

B. Discuss safety trends and Vision Zero strategies and take no action.

Pros None.

Cons Taking no action may continue to exacerbate the safety problem.

Staff Recommended Option

Discuss proposed strategies and provide guidance to staff on preferred alternatives, and authorize staff to continue with the development of Vision Zero strategies.

Attachments/References

Presentation