

Subcommittee on Equity

Policy Recommendations

Potential Policy Recommendation #1

Improve data, identify uses, formalize statewide consideration of equity

Rationale:

Connecticut has some of the best crash record data in the country and active efforts to continually improve it. However, analysis as it pertains to equity is limited. Opportunities for this analysis and dedicated groups to consider the narrative of crashes and state policies could better position the state in equity-oriented thinking around traffic fatalities.

Proposed Recommendations:

- Establish an annual report by the Department of Public Health which reviews crash-related injuries broken down by race, age, and gender to explore trends and disparities (existing state crash data does not include race data)
 - When PR-1 crash report is due to be revamped, consider whether and how data informing equity disparities (e.g. race, disability status) can be appropriately captured
- Establish a Fatal Crash Team to supplement police investigations and to make recommendations to the municipality, state, legislature, and the Vision Zero Council about environmental changes that could be changed to avoid future fatalities.
 - Include Department of Transportation engineers and other state agencies as appropriate
- Establish a Council on Driving Equity to consider equity in the traffic safety space
 - Include Commissioners of Motor Vehicles, Social Services, the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, Judicial Branch, and other identified, contributing parties

Potential Policy Recommendation #2

Establish traffic safety campaigns and education

Rationale:

Traffic safety education is largely targeted to new motor vehicle drivers. Few opportunities exist to educate the broader public who use roads in various ways (pedestrian, cyclist, passenger).

Proposed Recommendations:

- Develop and deploy targeted safety campaigns for populations most impacted by fatalities
 - Base on data
 - Engage Department of Education, Department of Motor Vehicles, Department of Public Health, Department of Social Services, Department of Transportation
- Develop and deploy multi-modal curriculum that grows with students – that starts in elementary school and addresses pedestrian, cyclist, and passenger safety (aligns with recommendations of the Education Subcommittee)
- Partner with organizations that serve vulnerable populations including veterans, immigrants and refugees, and the re-entry population to provide opportunities for safety education

Potential Policy Recommendation #3

Create opportunities for car seat distribution and education

Rationale:

Research has found that individuals of lower socioeconomic status are less likely to have their children ride in appropriate child restraints. In Connecticut: only 1 out of 5 car seats are installed correctly.

Proposal:

- Establish program and funding stream to provide car seats for any needy families in Connecticut who do not have one
 - Determine requirements for eligibility, work with community partners on distribution and installation
- Review statutory requirements around car seat violations and consider opportunities for learning safety rather than only responding to penalty
 - Provide opportunities to show proof of acquiring proper seat in place of financial penalties
- Expand existing state resources like fitting stations, with a focus on training technicians in underserved areas, and promote child passenger safety education that is available online

Potential Policy Recommendation #4

Promote seatbelt safety among populations with lower usage rates

Rationale:

Seatbelts are the most effective safety intervention for motor vehicle passengers. However:

- Surveys of Connecticut high schoolers show that Black and Hispanic students are less likely to buckle up than others
- National data shows that veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder are less likely to wear seatbelts
- Pregnant women may be less likely to wear seatbelts correctly

Proposal:

- Establish partnership program between Department of Education, Department of Motor Vehicles, Department of Public Health, Department of Social Services, Department of Transportation to promote seatbelt education specific to vulnerable communities
 - Consider peer-to-peer education, parental involvement, access via community organizations
 - Partnerships with veteran organizations to encourage seatbelt usage
 - Materials about appropriate seatbelt use during pregnancy via health care providers

Potential Policy Recommendation #5

Reform license suspension and traffic court processes

Rationale:

As many as 75% of suspended drivers continue to drive, and drivers with suspended licenses are disproportionately involved in hit-and-run crashes. License suspensions for failure to pay falls disproportionately on citizens with fewer means to pay.

Proposal:

- Work with Judicial Branch to create culture of safety education as part of plea deals for select offenses (in lieu of a fine or for a reduced fine), tailored to the offense (aligns with Education Subcommittee recommendations)
- Establish a Council on Driving Equity to review state laws and policies around license suspensions to evaluate state practices including:
 - Suspending licenses only for safety violations
 - Distinguishing between Failure to Appear as opposed to Failure to Pay in suspensions
 - Formalizing payment plans for low-income offenders
 - Establishing alternative methods of "payment" for indigent populations (i.e. community service)

Potential Policy Recommendation #6

Create infrastructure that specifically protects bicycle, disabled, and pedestrian populations

Rationale:

Bicycle, disabled, and pedestrian populations are 'vulnerable road users' because they have less protection in the event of a crash and are more likely to be injured or killed if a crash occurs. Infrastructure is critical to an environment that prioritizes protection of these vulnerable road users.

Proposal:

- Increase funding for Community Connectivity Program (CCCP) and complete streets projects (support Engineering Subcommittee recommendation to make a Complete Streets plan a requirement for eligibility for CCGP funds)
- Identify appropriate entity to establish state standard for a determined number of crosswalks, sidewalks, and streetlights in areas pedestrian traffic density and consider funding adjustments accordingly
- Examine potential for enhancing bicycle and pedestrian criteria for Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program, i.e. requiring byways and walkways on at least half of the available area
- Set a goal of achieving leading pedestrian intervals on all state roads (where appropriate) by 2030
- Increase funding in 5-year capital plan for ADA-compliant curb ramps and sidewalks
 - The 2019 CTDOT ADA Transition Plan sets a goal of having ADA-compliant curb ramps throughout the state ROW by 2034. The goal can be accelerated to 2030.