



# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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In 2021, the Connecticut General Assembly (C.G.A.) passed Public Act 21-28 that established a [Vision Zero Council](#) to develop a state-wide policy and interagency approach to eliminate all transportation-related fatalities and severe injuries to pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, motorists and passengers. The council was charged with considering ways to improve safety across all modes of transportation by using data, new partnerships, safe planning, and community-based solutions to achieve the goal of zero transportation related fatalities.

The Council was also charged with creating and submitting a state-wide policy and interagency approach and any other recommendations to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to transportation. The council created this [interagency policy](#) and submitted it to C.G.A. in February 2022.

Subsequently, subsection (c) of P.A. 21-28 states that the council may establish committees at any time to advise the council in carrying out its duties. Following the submission of the interagency policy, the council moved to create four sub-committees to broaden participation among safety stakeholders and members of the public to inform the council as to what future recommendations might be made to C.G.A and Executive Branch Agencies. The four sub-committees include Engineering, Education, Enforcement and Equity respectively.

The council charged the sub-committees to meet regularly to discuss, create and submit proposed policy recommendations to the council based on their respective areas of expertise. The proposed policy recommendations were formally submitted to the council, and were officially presented, reviewed and voted upon during [a December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2022 meeting of the Vision Zero Council](#).

The following policy proposals set forth received a majority vote by Council members:

### Engineering Policy Proposals

- Requiring a Complete Streets Plan
  - Require each municipality to have an adopted Complete Streets Plan or comprehensive safety action plan in order to be eligible for certain State funding programs/grants (i.e., Community Connectivity).
- Clarify CTDOT Authority to Acquire Land for Trails
  - Currently, CTDOT may not have legislative authority to condemn ROW for off-road trails or bike/ped facilities. With trail networks growing to support non-motorized travel, this authority can facilitate expansion of these networks.
- Adoption of an ICE Policy (Intersection Control Evaluation)
  - CTDOT should adopt an intersection control evaluation (ICE) policy; an ICE is a data-driven, performance-based framework to screen intersection alternatives and identify an optimal solution. This can provide consistent documentation to support transparency of decisions, increased awareness of innovative solutions, & objective performance metrics for decision making.
- CTDOT Study of Specific Traffic Movement Regulations
  - CTDOT should study whether and how the “Idaho Stop” could be legalized in Connecticut, as well

as whether to prohibit “Right on Red” at intersections with crosswalks.

### **Enforcement Policy Proposals**

- Enact a Helmet Law for all Motorcycle Riders
  - 190 unhelmeted motorcycle operators or passengers were fatally injured over the past 5 years.
- Establish a Fatal Collision Reduction Team to Engage in High Visibility Enforcement Blitzen
  - Gather traffic officers from State Police and/or Municipal Departments, including specially trained officers (Drug Recognition Experts, Advanced Roadside Impaired Driving Enforcement)
  - Identify traffic violations that correlate with crashes and identify high frequency crash locations
  - Engage in high visibility enforcement efforts targeting those identified traffic violations in the identified areas, using the special team
  - Public input should be solicited to help identify areas of concern
- Implement Automated Traffic Enforcement
  - C.G.A. should examine best practices in the 18 states that have speed cameras, and the 22 states that have red light cameras, and advance legislation that would authorize automated traffic enforcement in locations with a documented history of excessive speeding or serious crashes.
  - The C.G.A. should consider results of the CTDOT pilot launching in early 2023.
  - Approval of a third party, such as the Office of the State Traffic Administrator, should be required before deployment of automated traffic enforcement on municipal roadways, ensuring there is evidence justifying the selected location.
- Enact a Prohibition on Open Alcohol Containers in Motor Vehicles
  - Currently, Connecticut has legislation that prohibits drinking alcohol while operating a vehicle. See C.G.S. § 53a-213.
  - Drinking while driving is a class C misdemeanor, punishable by up to 3 months in jail and a fine of up to \$500.
  - There are no statutes that prohibit simply having an open container of alcohol in the vehicle or a passenger’s consumption of alcohol while a vehicle is in operation.

### **Education Policy Proposals**

- Utilize schools to better educate children about road safety
  - Create a Vision Zero Schools program. Based on efforts from North Dakota, create a list of criteria for a school to become a Vision Zero school, which could include traffic safety education to students, peer-to-peer education, outreach to parents, safety messaging to teachers and staff, etc. The Department of Motor Vehicles, Department of Transportation and Department of Education would encourage the schools to do add this to their existing curricula (with help from community safety partners). This program would be optional for schools.
  - Implementation suggestion: This initiative could be tied to federal Safe Routes to School initiatives/funding. Involve children and parents in creating safer school zones and routes to schools. It also is important that educational materials and opportunities are looked at through the lens of accessibility.
- Utilize the judicial system in driver re-training
  - The criminal justice system provides an opportunity for driver retraining, specifically for traffic offenders.
  - Offense-specific retraining classes. Expand the operator retraining program to include an option for the Judicial Branch to offer classes tailored to an offense as part of a plea deal, which could reduce

the fine amount that a driver must pay.

- Implementation suggestion: For example, if the driver received a distracted driving ticket, they could take a short class on the types of distractions and why they're dangerous. (This could be similar to the existing Child Passenger Safety course). This initiative will require more effort to establish and have a longer time horizon but could continue to emphasize safety in the traffic ticket process.
- Utilize DMV to educate drivers on a more frequent basis
  - Rationale: The DMV has frequent touch points where they can impart new information and reminders to current drivers throughout their lives.
  - Empower DMV to have more frequent engagement with customers/drivers at every available opportunity, such as at license renewals and registration. This could be in the form of a video that must be watched in its entirety before an online application could be processed. The video would be an update on new laws that impact motorists, pedestrians, and bicycles.
  - Incorporate Connecticut driver training materials within the DMV process of awarding a Connecticut license to out-of-state drivers when they become Connecticut residents. Focus on Connecticut-specific laws as well as key points that have been implicated in car-to-pedestrian and car-to-cyclist fatalities.
- Utilize DPH to educate around emerging traffic safety issues
  - Rationale: DPH is a leading source for safety and health information, and fund to play a role in traffic safety messaging.
  - Recommendation: Specifically, around driving under the influence of RX drugs (with an emphasis on opioids, OTC medications and marijuana), DPH could choose one or two local health departments and/or health districts to collaborate on an educational initiative about the dangers of driving under the influence of prescription drugs. It could include outreach to pharmacies or hospitals (or possibly even methadone clinics) who could themselves communicate information to drivers receiving medications.

## **Equity Policy Proposals**

- 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.
  - Recommendation: 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. DPH already gathers statistics on hospital discharges; this would require adding a category for motor vehicle crashes. (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 (i.e., race, disability status) can be appropriately captured.
  - To the degree possible, disability data should be collected in crash-related injuries as well, with the understanding that people may not volunteer this information.
- Support the Education Policy Proposal to expand traffic safety campaigns through 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). This could include organizing large scale safety initiatives targeting dangerous driving

behaviors, car seats and seat belt usage utilizing multiple agencies and vulnerable groups.

- This recommendation also supports the Education Policy Recommendation of including traffic safety in schools by recommending C.G.A. explore options to include more crash/safe driving education into existing elementary, middle, and high school education curricula.
- C.G.A. should review statutory requirements around car seat violations and consider opportunities for learning safety rather than only responding to penalties
  - Recommendation: Provide opportunities to show proof of acquiring a proper seat in place of financial penalties.
- 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.
  - Recommendation: The Department of Transportation should lead a partnership program between Department of Education, Department of Motor Vehicles, Department of Public Health, Department of Social Services, and veterans' organizations to promote seatbelt education specific to vulnerable communities. This partnership should consider peer-to-peer education, parental involvement, access via community organizations.
- Review 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. C.G.A. should review the current offenses that trigger license suspensions.
  - Recommendation: C.G.A. has done this in the past (<https://www.C.G.A..ct.gov/2007/rpt/2007-r-0636.htm>). C.G.A. should once again review offenses that result in license suspension, how many suspensions occur, and for what offenses and should reassess offenses that result in suspension in an updated report.
  - This recommendation also supports the Education Policy Recommendation to consider creating and providing offense-specific safety classes in lieu of conviction/financial penalty.
- Recommend CTDOT examine the equity committee proposals in development of its new capital plan for Fiscal year 2023-2027 to 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.
  - This should include consideration to crosswalk signals. Often, signal times are not long enough for people to safely cross the distance across the street.