



SAFE & HEALTHY STREETS

Commission of Richmond Virginia



Annual Report 2021

**2021 SUMMARY OF INITIATIVES AND RECOMMENDATIONS
SUBMITTED DECEMBER 31, 2021**



SAFE & HEALTHY STREETS COMMISSION

A Commission of the City of Richmond, VA that monitors the safety of the transportation network and develops recommendations to address safety issues.

Obligation:

The commission shall provide advice and recommendations to the Council concerning plans for the formulation of a highway safety program for the city and conduct periodic reviews of the operation and effect of such program.

On an annual basis, the commission shall provide the Council with recommendations concerning plans for the formulation of a highway safety program for the city and with the results of the periodic reviews of the operation and effect of such program it conducts.

Composition:

Assigned to the Land Use, Housing & Transportation Standing Committee. The commission shall be composed of 12 members as follows:

- (1) A member of Council.
- (2) Four (4) qualified voters of the City who hold no office of profit under the City government.
- (3) Three (3) members with expertise in transportation safety.
- (4) The superintendent of the School Division of the city of Richmond.
- (5) The commanding officer of the Traffic Division of the Department of Police.
- (6) The traffic engineer of the city.
- (7) The director of Public Works.

Meetings:

3rd Wednesday 2:00 - 4:00 pm unless other notice is given. As of April 2020, meetings will be held virtually until further notice.

Current Membership:

Louise Lockett Gordon, Chair
 Cassi Patterson, Secretary
 Tara Fitzpatrick
 Max Hepp-Buchanan
 Michael Todd
 Christopher Woody, Sr.
 Norman Washington
 Andreas Addison, City Council
 Michael Sawyer, DPW Engineer
 Jason Kamras, Richmond Public Schools
 Donald Davenport, Richmond Police Dept.
 Bobby Vincent, Director of Public Works

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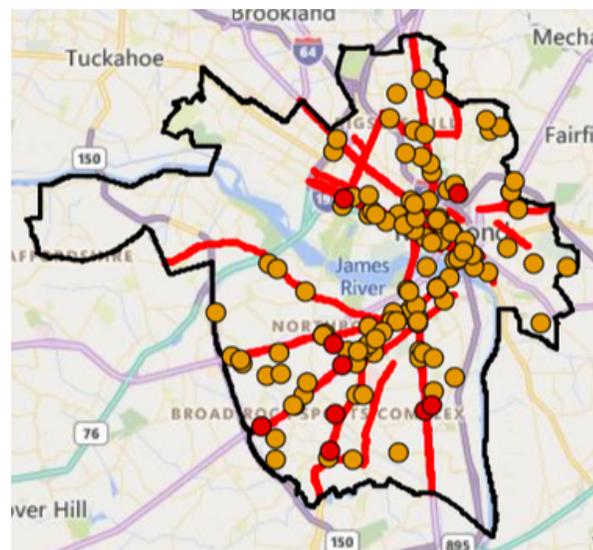
STATE OF TRANSPORTATION NETWORK HEALTH

This section summarizes key data about the health and safety of Richmond's multi-modal transportation network, specifically for 2021 and trends over time.

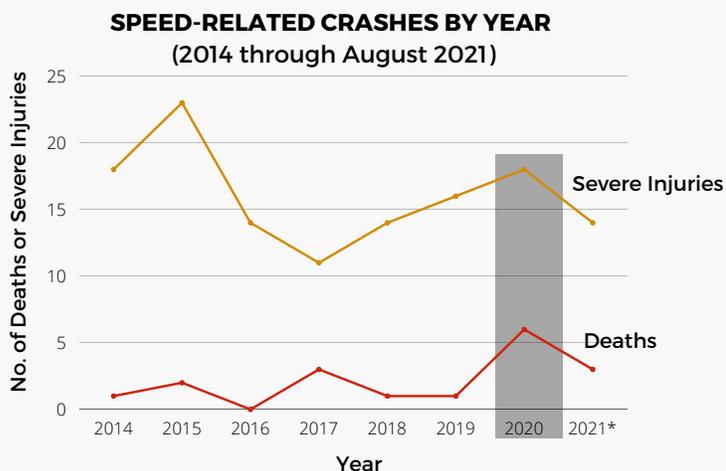
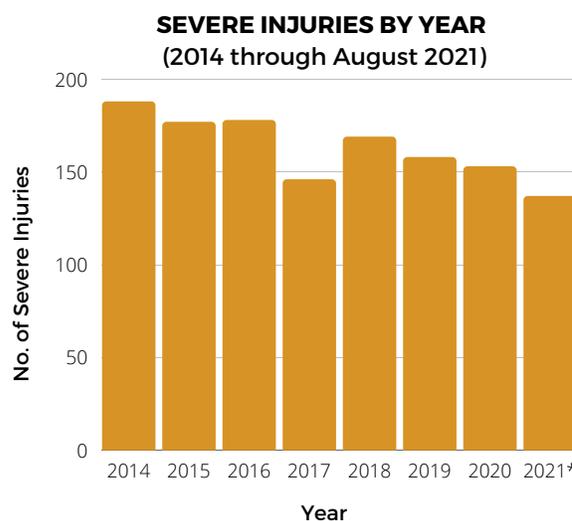
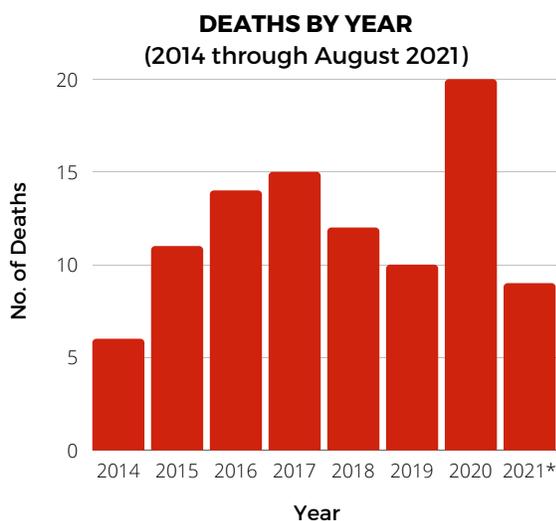
TRAFFIC CRASHES

As of August 2021, nine (9) people were killed and 137 were incapacitated (severely injured) while traveling in Richmond. The map to the right depicts the location of where those deaths and severe injuries occurred, and largely overlaps with the known High Injury Network (HIN).

Reviewing the 8-year trend of traffic deaths and incapacitations (below), traffic deaths began to trend down in 2018-2019 and spiked in 2020. Severe injuries had been on a steady decline, however, 2021 injuries are on pace to surpass 2020. Crash data through December 2021 will not be finalized by the Virginia Department of Transportation until the beginning of 2022.



Map of people incapacitated or killed on Richmond streets, January - August 2021 (latest data available at time of report). Source: [City of Richmond Vision Zero Dashboard](#)



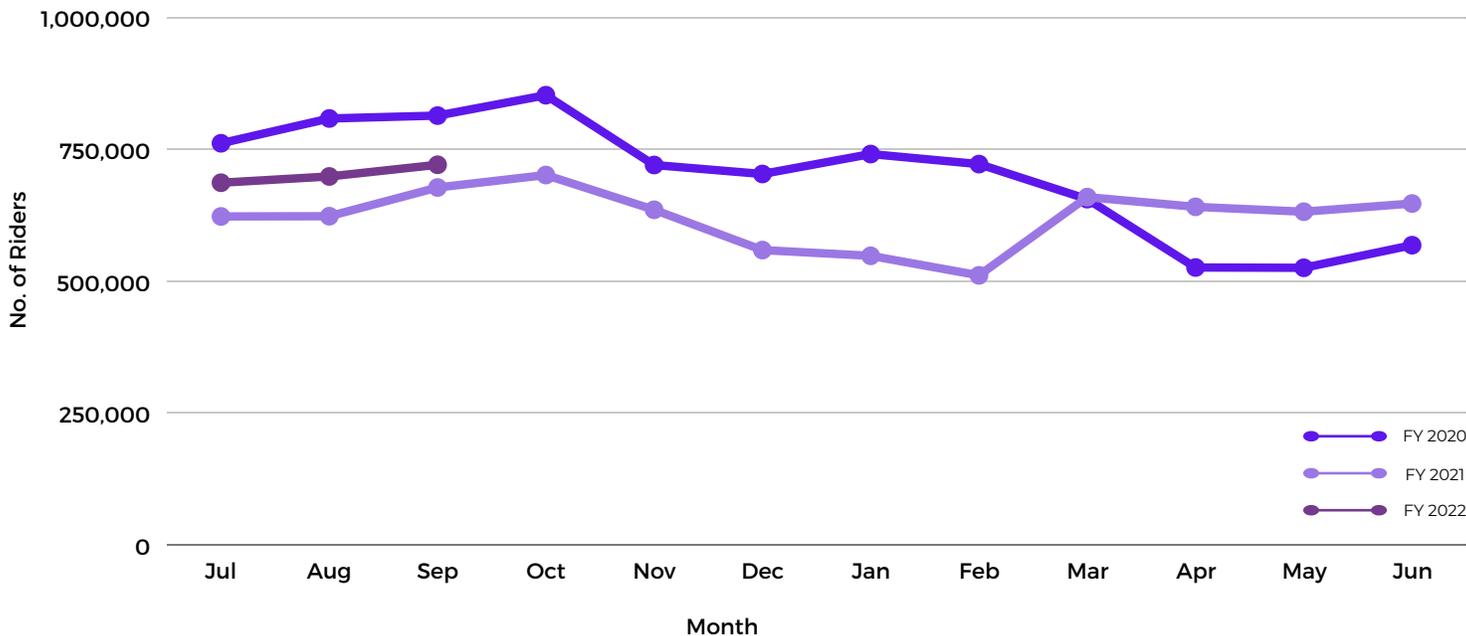
INCREASED SPEED A FACTOR

The emergency response to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and continuing to date has impacted travel behavior in Richmond and these trends parallel national trends. Stay at home and social distancing mandates produced a decrease in vehicular commute travel. As a result of lower traffic volumes, increased speeding and speed-related crashes were observed.

GRTC RIDERSHIP

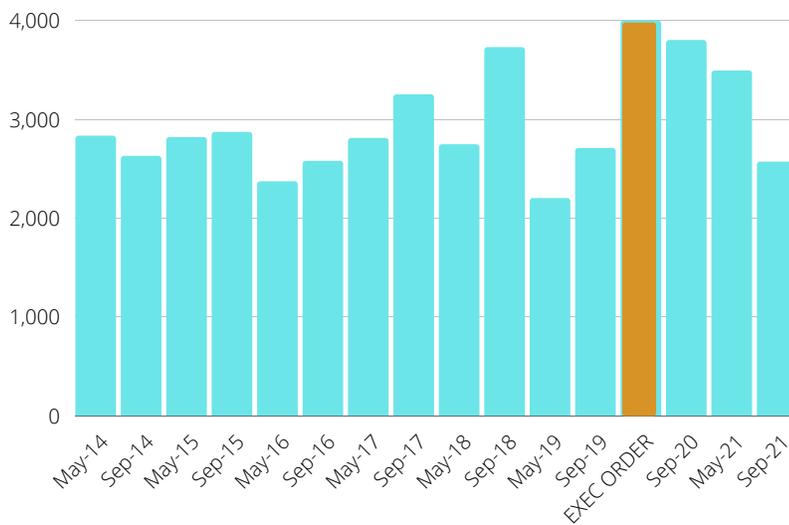
Ridership on bus transportation saw a sharp decline from February 2020 to April 2020 as stay at home and social distancing mandates in response to COVID-19 began to take effect. Usage ticked up in March 2021 through June at the end of fiscal year 2021, and continued to increase between July to September 2021 compared to the same months the previous year. To sustain ridership and provide equitable access to public transportation, GRTC stopped collecting fares on March 19, 2020 and continues to provide fare-free service to date.

MONTHLY RIDERSHIP



BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN ACTIVITY

According to Richmond City Health Department & Bike Walk RVA's latest [Bike Ped Counts report](#), estimated daily bicycle and pedestrian activity on selected corridors has trended upward since 2014 (with 2019 counts falling on poor weather days). Activity began to drop in 2020 with COVID-19 stay at home and social distancing orders. Bike Ped Counts record biking and walking travel for a two-hour period over three weekdays in May and September and tend to reflect travel for transportation. Counts on the Virginia Capital Trail are not part of this data collection since the trail began conducting its own counts.

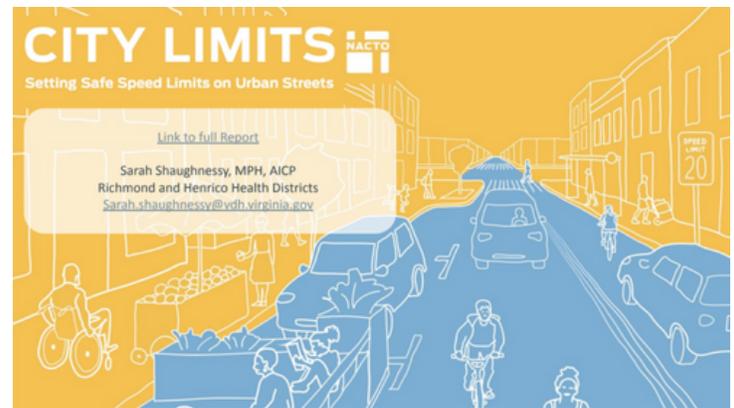


LATEST IN SAFE & HEALTHY TRANSPORTATION

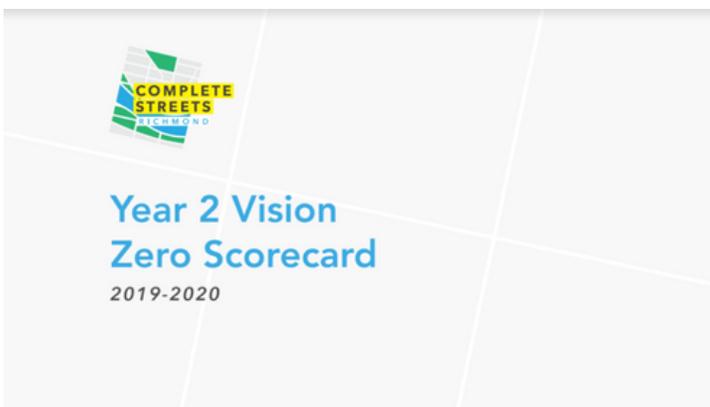
In order to provide recommendations on improving the City's transportation network, the Commission strives to bring subject matter experts to present on a variety of transportation-related topics and trends. The following presentations were heard during Commission meetings in 2021.



Verra Mobility presented an overview of the recently passed state law allowing automated speed enforcement in school and work zones, the state of technology use across Virginia, and the pros and cons of different speed enforcement technologies available. [Click to view presentation.](#)



The National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) published a best practices guide for setting safe speed limits on city streets. An overview of approaches to setting default speed limits, slow zones, and corridor speed limits using a Safe Speed Study was presented. [Click to view presentation.](#)



The Richmond Complete Streets Coalition presented its annual review of the approved Vision Zero Action Plan. Recommendations included a maximum city-wide speed limit of 35 mph, implementing temporary open and slow streets, expanding bike share and exploring privatization. [Click to view report.](#)



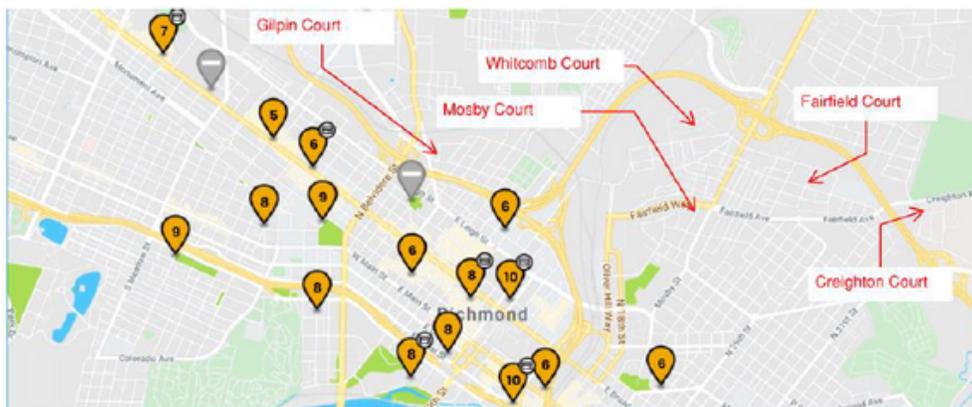
In partnership with Richmond City Health Department and Bike Walk RVA, the annual Bike Ped Count report results were presented. Overall activity decreased with the onset of pandemic response, however, 1st and 3rd St observed major bicycle activity increases after installation of protected bike lanes. [Click to view report.](#)

PROGRAMS & PROJECTS

The Commission heard updates on ongoing and new initiatives the City of Richmond is doing to improve level of comfort throughout the transportation network.

SCHOOL CROSSING GUARD PROGRAM

Richmond Public Schools crossing guard program coordination was shifted from Richmond Police Department to RPS in the spring of 2019. The program is now operated as a community-based program, with most crossing guards recruited from the school system and stipended for their duty. The number of crossing guards has grown from 8 in 2018-19 to over 80 for the 2021-22 school year. All crossing guards are trained, uniformed, and properly equipped.



RVA BIKE SHARE

The Office of Equitable Transit and Mobility will pilot a fare-free membership with Fairfield Court residents and install 15 electric assist bicycles/docking stations to increase public access to bikeshare. If successful, the Office will seek to expand with stations at each lower income housing community.

HIGH RISK IMPAIRED DRIVER ACTION PLAN

TA workgroup in partnership with Richmond Police Department, Richmond Public Works and Richmond Behavioral Health Authority was established to better understand impaired driver trends and develop an action plan. Data collection and subject matter expert interviews are in progress. A final draft action plan is anticipated for winter 2022. [Click here for most recent presentation.](#)



RECOMMENDATIONS

Below is a summary of projects and policies the Commission voted to support.

PROJECTS

Projects to support for Transportation Alternatives Program funding FY23-24 grant cycle:

- Carnation Street Sidewalks (Phase II)
- Main Street Pedestrian Safety Curb Extensions (Phase I)
- Cary Street Pedestrian Safety Curb Extensions (Phase II)
- Hull Street at 29th Street Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon
- Gillies Creek Greenway (Phase IV) to Richmond Road
- Scott's Addition Greenway from Arthur Ashe Boulevard to Summit Avenue
- Downtown Core Protected Bike Lanes
- Patterson Avenue Parking Protected Bike Lanes (Phase II)
- US Route 1 Pedestrian Hybrid Beacons
- Forest Hill Avenue Pedestrian Safety Improvements
- Jefferson Avenue Streetscape (Phase II)
- Safe Routes to School Program

POLICIES

Policies and practices to support within the City of Richmond:

- Use of photo speed camera enforcement within school and work zones
- Establish task force on illegal vehicle use
- Balanced approach to distribution of CVTA local funds to improve the multi-modal transportation network
- Utilizing a transportation equity lens to determine projects to fund using City's newly established Complete Streets budgetary item

Policies to support at the 2022 General Assembly legislative session:

- Pass a primary seat belt law for all seats.
- Allow local jurisdictions to use photo speed enforcement in parks, residential districts, and commercial districts
- Lower reckless driving from 20MPH over the speed limit to 10MPH over on streets where the posted speed limit is 25MPH or lower and the jurisdiction has a population over 200,000.
- Lower the blood alcohol concentration level for impaired driving from 0.08 to 0.05
- Direct VDOT to use a state-of-the-art asset management approach using life cycle cost, pavement condition, and bridge condition to direct maintenance funding to cities and towns to achieve performance goals for pavement and bridge condition and to be a maintenance-first funded surface transportation system.
- Allow a person on a bicycle to yield the right-of-way at a stop-controlled intersection instead of coming to a complete stop.

RECOGNITIONS

The Commission awarded the 2020 John T. Hanna Transportation Safety Award to Janet M. Brooking, DRIVE SMART Virginia, and Brantley Tyndall, Bike Walk RVA, for their work in advocating for the adoption of statewide hands free driving and photo speed enforcement in school and work zones legislation.

LOOKING FORWARD

The Commission will consider a number of papers introduced at Council and invite presentations on transportation topics in 2022. Items may include, but are not limited to:

- Establishing default speed limit of 20 mph on all residential streets (introduced paper)
- Establishing a Department of Transportation (introduced paper)
- Case studies in practical application of reducing speeds (e.g. Norfolk, Henrico, etc)
- Case studies in quick-build traffic calming measures
- Installation of protected intersections
- Establishing slow zones in high pedestrian and bicycle activity areas
- Input in Richmond Connects Multimodal Plan development

