



Rashi Kesarwani
Councilmember District 1

CONSENT CALENDAR
March 8, 2022

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of City Council

FROM: Councilmember Rashi Kesarwani (Author), Councilmember Taplin (Author), Councilmember Robinson (Co-Sponsor), and Councilmember Wengraf (Co-Sponsor)

SUBJECT: Referral to Implement State Law AB 43 for Reduced Speed Limits on High-Injury Commercial Corridors

RECOMMENDATION

Refer to the City Manager to implement state law AB 43 on:

- High-injury commercial corridors as identified in our Vision Zero Annual Report, 2020-2021¹ in order to allow a reduction in speed limits by 5 miles per hour.
- Any other corridors covered by AB 43, as appropriate, in order to implement reduced prima facie speed limits and identify those corridors for future traffic studies where prima facie limits are presently unsafe.

Upon completion of this referral, we note that a budget allocation would be needed in the amount of \$25,000 to \$50,000 for new speed limit signage. Funding will be requested later (likely for the FY 2023-24 budget) in order to allow time for staff to determine the applicable streets for additional signage.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

New State Law AB 43 Allows for Reduction of Speed Limits on Streets with a High Percentage of Commercial Activity. Assembly Bill 43, signed into law in October 2021, allows cities to take into account the presence of vulnerable pedestrian groups such as seniors, children, people with disabilities and unhoused individuals when setting speed limits and allowing them to reduce speeds on certain types of streets. The law provides for reducing speed limits on non-commercial

¹ See City of [Berkeley Vision Zero Annual Report, 2020-2021](#), March 2021

streets beginning June 30, 2024. Beginning January 2022, local jurisdictions may reduce speed limits on a highway contiguous to a business activity district as follows:

- 30 miles per hour speed limit may be reduced by 5 miles per hour to 25 miles per hour; and
- 25 miles per hour may be reduced to 20 miles per hour.²

The new speed limits apply only to those streets that comply with the below conditions:

- A maximum of four traffic lanes;
- A maximum posted 30 or 25 miles per hour speed limit immediately prior to and after the business activity district if establishing a 25 or 20 miles per hour speed limit;
- The business activity district meeting the criteria of at least three of the below listed requirements:
 1. 50 percent or more of the fronting property consisting of retail and/or dining commercial uses;
 2. Inclusion of parking spaces along the road;
 3. Traffic signals and stop signs located at intervals of no more than 600 feet;
 4. Marked crosswalks not controlled by a traffic control device.

According to the map shown below, several of our busiest commercial corridors (such as: Gilman, San Pablo, Shattuck, Telegraph and University) are also among our high-injury network of streets. This referral requests staff to consider reducing speeds along those applicable commercial areas in the interest of enhancing public safety and protecting the health and well being of pedestrians inhabiting those areas.

BACKGROUND

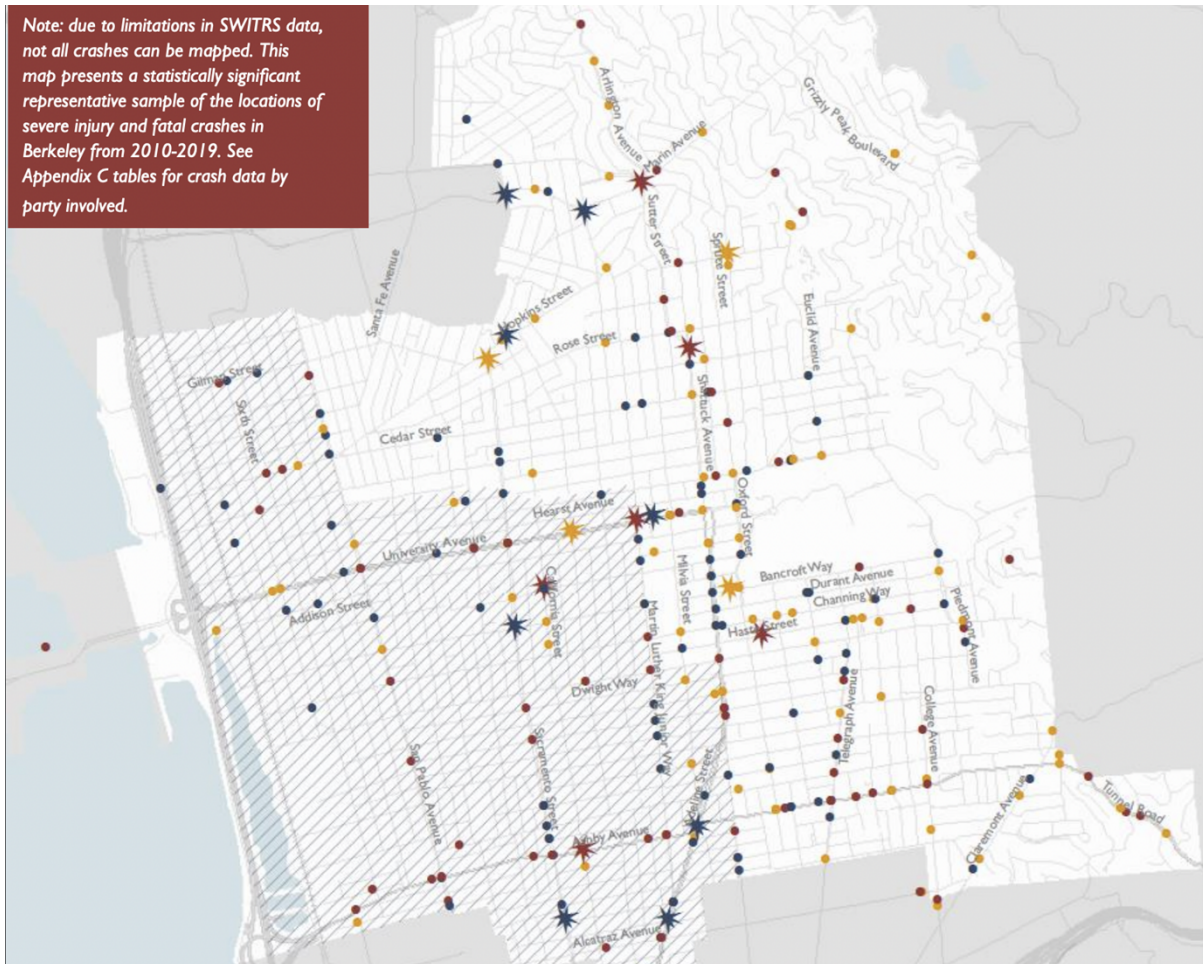
Berkeley Has Established a Vision Zero Goal. In March of 2018, Berkeley adopted a Vision Zero Resolution³ seeking to end all traffic-related deaths and severe injuries on our streets by 2028. Passage of this resolution officially joined us to the network of cities throughout the country mobilized to address the significant numbers of injuries and fatalities on the nation's roadways, and to pursue safe mobility for all users.⁴ By adopting this resolution, Berkeley committed to an equity-focused data driven approach to eliminate traffic fatalities and severe injuries recognized as a result of how our streets are designed and regulated. As such, traffic fatalities and injuries are understood *not* as inevitable, rather preventable through attention to data indicating causes of collisions and designing projects emphasizing safety.

² See the text for [Assembly Bill No. 43](#), section 22358.9 (a) (1)

³ See [Resolution No. 68,371-N.S. In Support of Vision Zero](#), adopted March 27, 2018

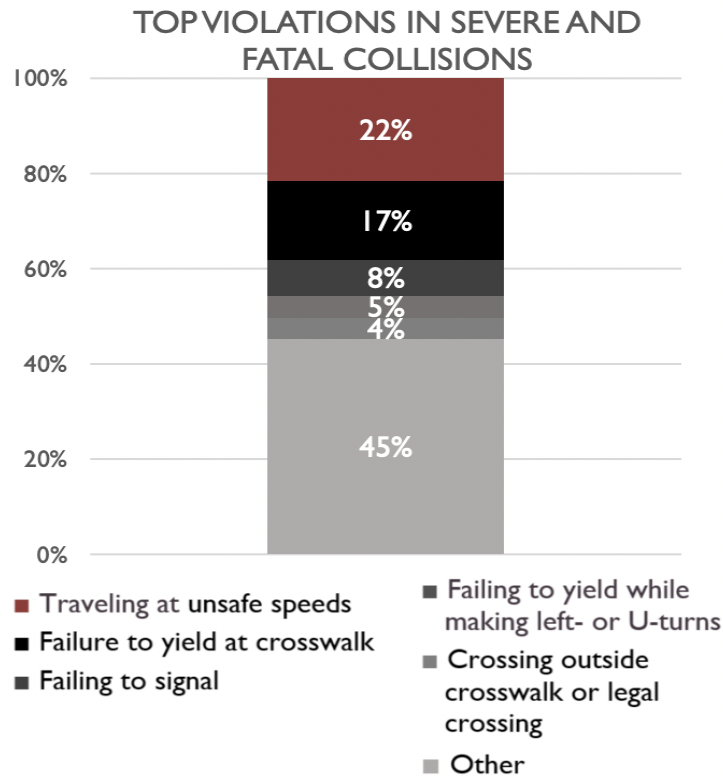
⁴ See the [Vision Zero](#) Website

Data Reveals Berkeley's Network of High-Injury Streets. Our Vision Zero program uses information based on the most recent 10 years of collision data available through the Statewide Integrated Traffic Records System (SWITRS). This information indicates on which streets the highest number of accidents occur, as well as the types of California Vehicle Code Violations associated with the collisions. The map below shows the location of 277 severe injury and fatality crashes between 2010 and 2019, also representing the streets where the greatest number of fatality and severe injury crashes occurred.



Source: [City of Berkeley Vision Zero Annual Report 2020-2021](#), p. 9

During these same years, the top two traffic violations resulting in severe injuries or deaths on Berkeley streets were: drivers traveling at unsafe speeds and drivers not yielding at crosswalks, as shown in the chart below.



Source: [City of Berkeley Vision Zero Annual Report 2020-2021](#), p. 5

Studies have shown that the faster a colliding vehicle is traveling, the more damage is done to the struck pedestrian.⁵ As speeding is shown as the top violation resulting in severe injuries and deaths on Berkeley streets, reducing speed limits can both save lives and lessen the severity of injury.

FISCAL IMPACTS

Staff time to determine which commercial corridors are AB 43 applicable. Funding will be requested later (likely for the FY 2023-24 budget) in order to allow time for staff to determine the applicable streets for additional signage. Costs for new speed limit signs are \$250 per sign, and staff time for installation will need to be budgeted. Budget is unlikely to exceed \$50,000.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Safe streets encourage increased pedestrian, bicycle and micro-mobility usage, reducing greenhouse gas emissions from non-electric vehicles. This aligns with the City’s Strategic Plan priority to be a global leader in addressing climate change, protecting the environment, and advancing environmental justice.

⁵ See [U.S. Department of Transportation National Highway Traffic Safety Administration: Literature Review on Vehicle Travel Speeds and Pedestrian Injuries](#), October 21, 1999

CONTACT

Rashi Kesarwani, Councilmember District 1

(510) 981-7110

