A wide-angle photograph of a city street in Seattle. The street is lined with large, mature trees that have sparse green leaves, suggesting early spring. A dark blue SUV is driving towards the camera in the center of the road. On the left, a silver car is partially visible. Several pedestrians are crossing the street at a crosswalk. On the right, there's a bus stop shelter and a small dog on the sidewalk. A sign on the sidewalk reads "Look Out For Each Other" with icons of a car, a person, and a dog. The sky is clear and blue.

# Vision Zero update

Moving toward a healthy, equitable, sustainable Seattle





# Moment of silence

Since City launched Vision Zero 6 years ago

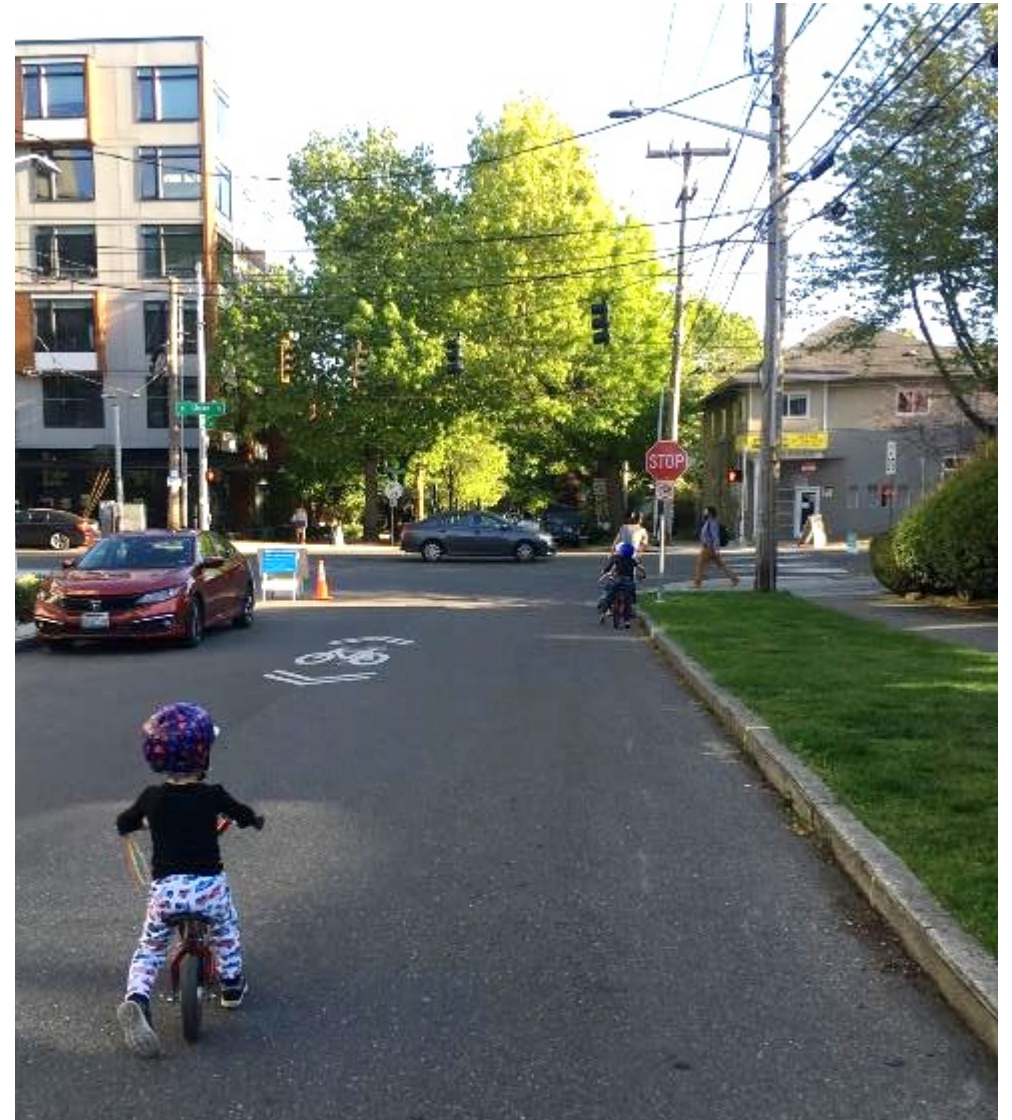
- **144 people have been killed** in traffic crashes
- More than **1,000 serious injury crashes**

Together, we affirm our support for safe and racially equitable streets. We acknowledge our commitment to end serious injuries and fatalities on our streets.



# Presentation overview, key takeaways

- Street design matters and can advance safety, racial equity, and sustainability goals
- We are not getting closer to ending traffic deaths and serious injuries
- We can get there by using proven solutions and reducing reliance on strategies that aren't advancing goals



# Same system, same outcomes

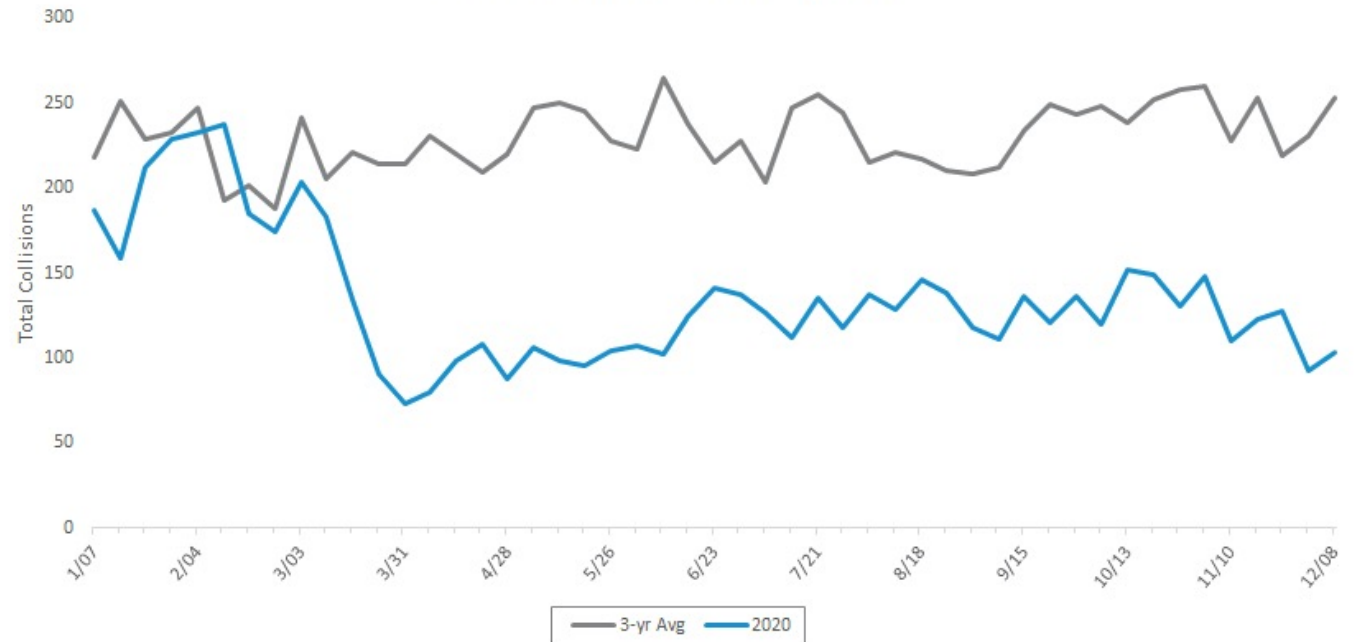
In a “normal” year, we see:

- 12,000 crashes
- 20 traffic deaths
- 160 serious injury crashes

In 2020, we saw:

- 7,100 total crashes
- 25 traffic deaths (prelim data)
- 144 serious injury crashes

*Total collisions by week (2020 vs previous 3-yr avg)*





# The importance of safe street design

Many of our streets were designed to prioritize the fast movement of vehicles.

- 50% of fatal and serious injury crashes occur on 11% of street network
- Multi-lane, high speed, high volume arterials
- Since we launched Vision Zero:
  - Aurora Ave: 20 deaths, 49 serious injuries
  - Rainier Ave S: 5 deaths, 60 serious injuries
  - MLK Jr Way S: 7 deaths, 35 serious injuries
  - Lake City Way: 5 deaths, 23 serious injuries



*People traveling on Rainier Ave S at Martin Luther King Jr Way S*

# Contributing factors to crashes

**Street design** is a key factor that influences behavior

Year over year, consistent contributing factors (human behavior):

- **Speed**
- **Impairment**
- **Distraction**
- **Failure to yield to pedestrian**

Hit and run crashes are increasing. This makes it hard to determine what happened/led to a crash and whether the person who fled was impaired.

	Hit & Run	Total Fatalities	%
2017	3	21	14%
2018	2	14	14%
2019	8	26	31%
2020	7	24	29%

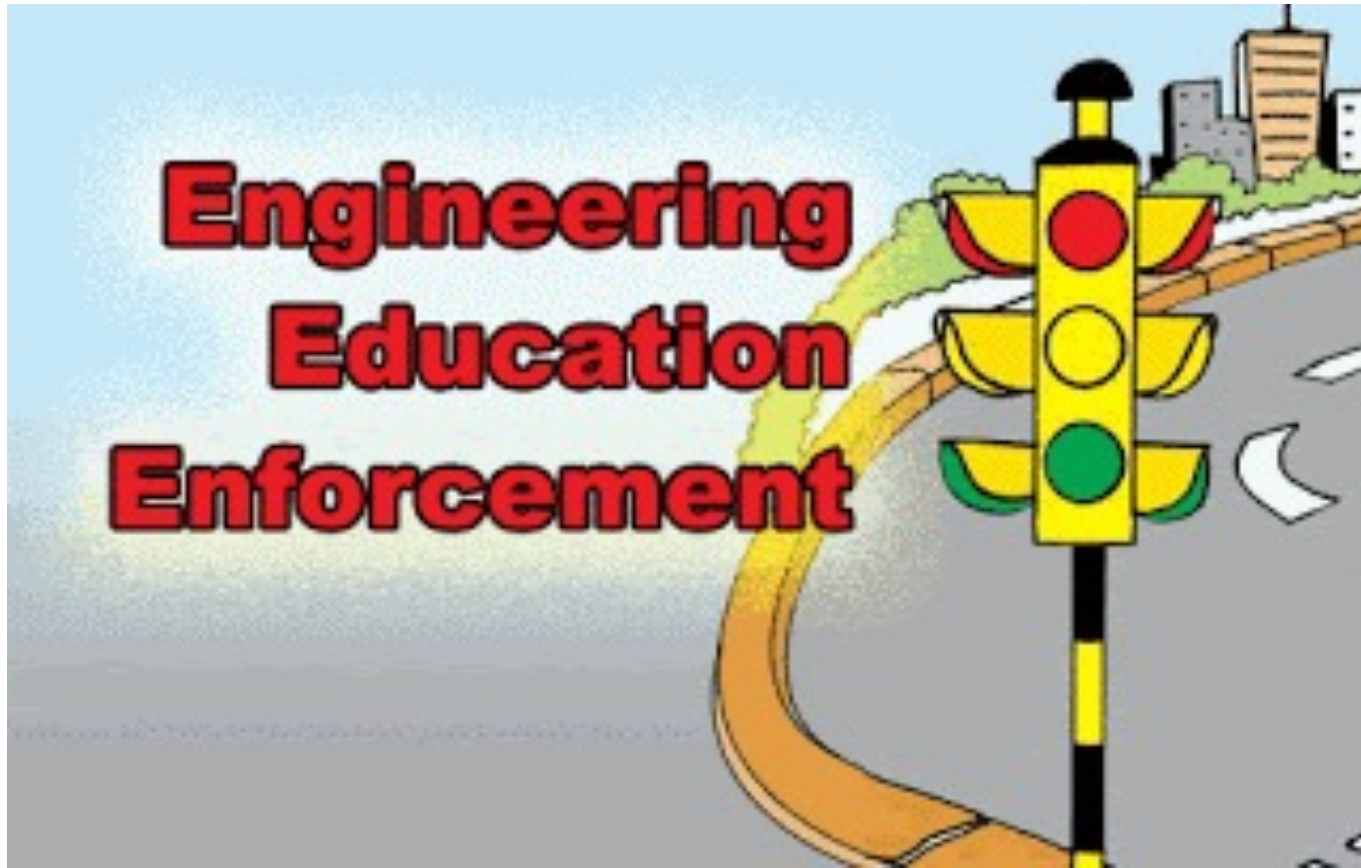
# Vision Zero principles

- Traffic deaths are preventable (they are not “accidents”)
- Success does not hinge on individual actions, but on designing a safe system of self-enforcing streets.
- Account for human imperfection

In Seattle, our goal is to end traffic deaths and serious injuries on city streets by 2030.



# Traditional approach to traffic safety





# Where has this gotten us?

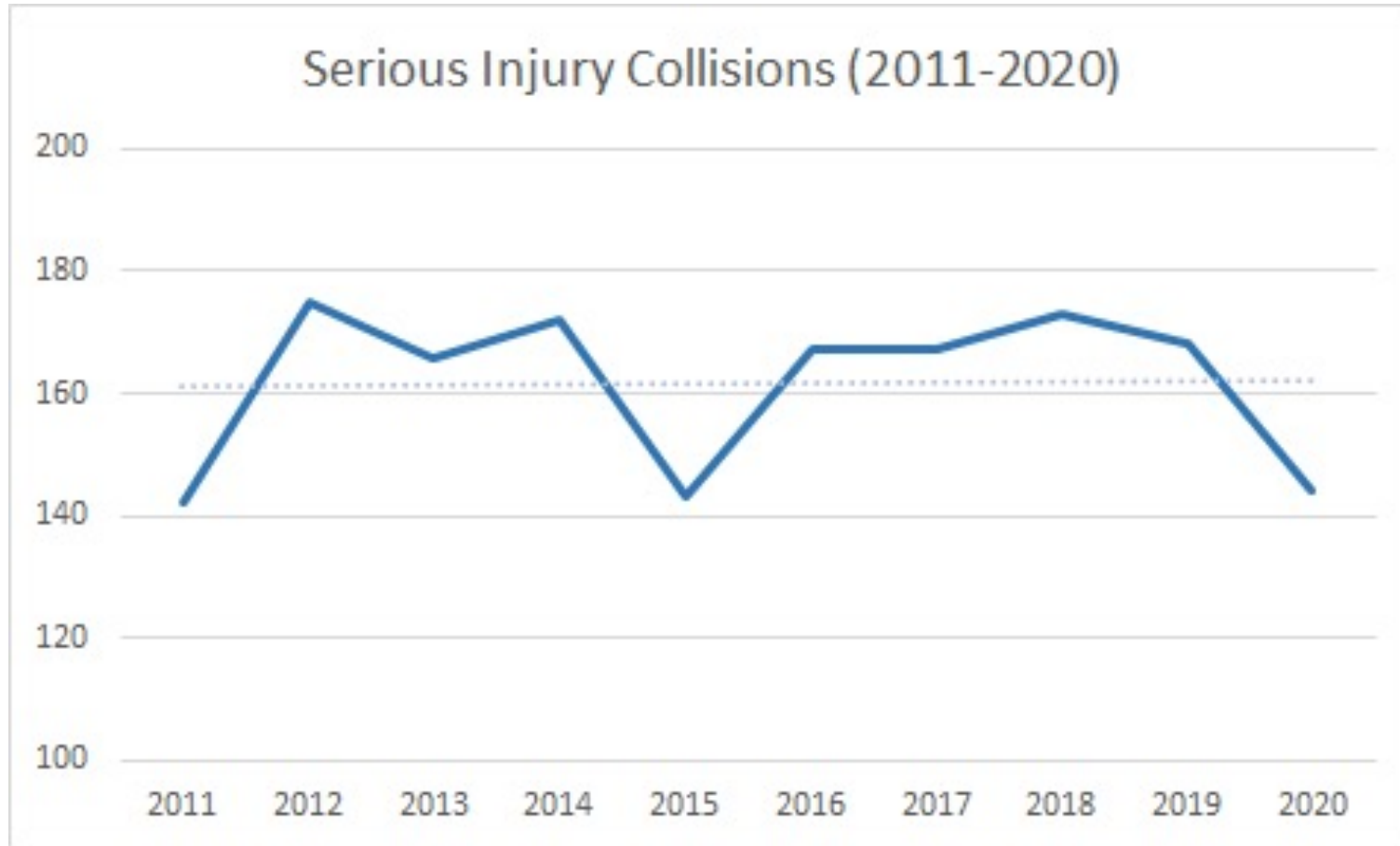
# Closer to ending traffic deaths?

Overall traffic deaths increasing due to increasing rate of deaths of people walking and biking, while trendline for fatalities involving people in vehicles is decreasing.





# Closer to ending serious injuries?



Looking at data from one year alone can obscure the bigger picture.

Despite a reduction in 2020, on average, we see 160 serious injury crashes a year.

# Protecting the most vulnerable travelers?



- People walking and biking (2018 – 2020): 7% of total crashes, but 66% of fatalities
- Average age of people walking who have died: 56 years old

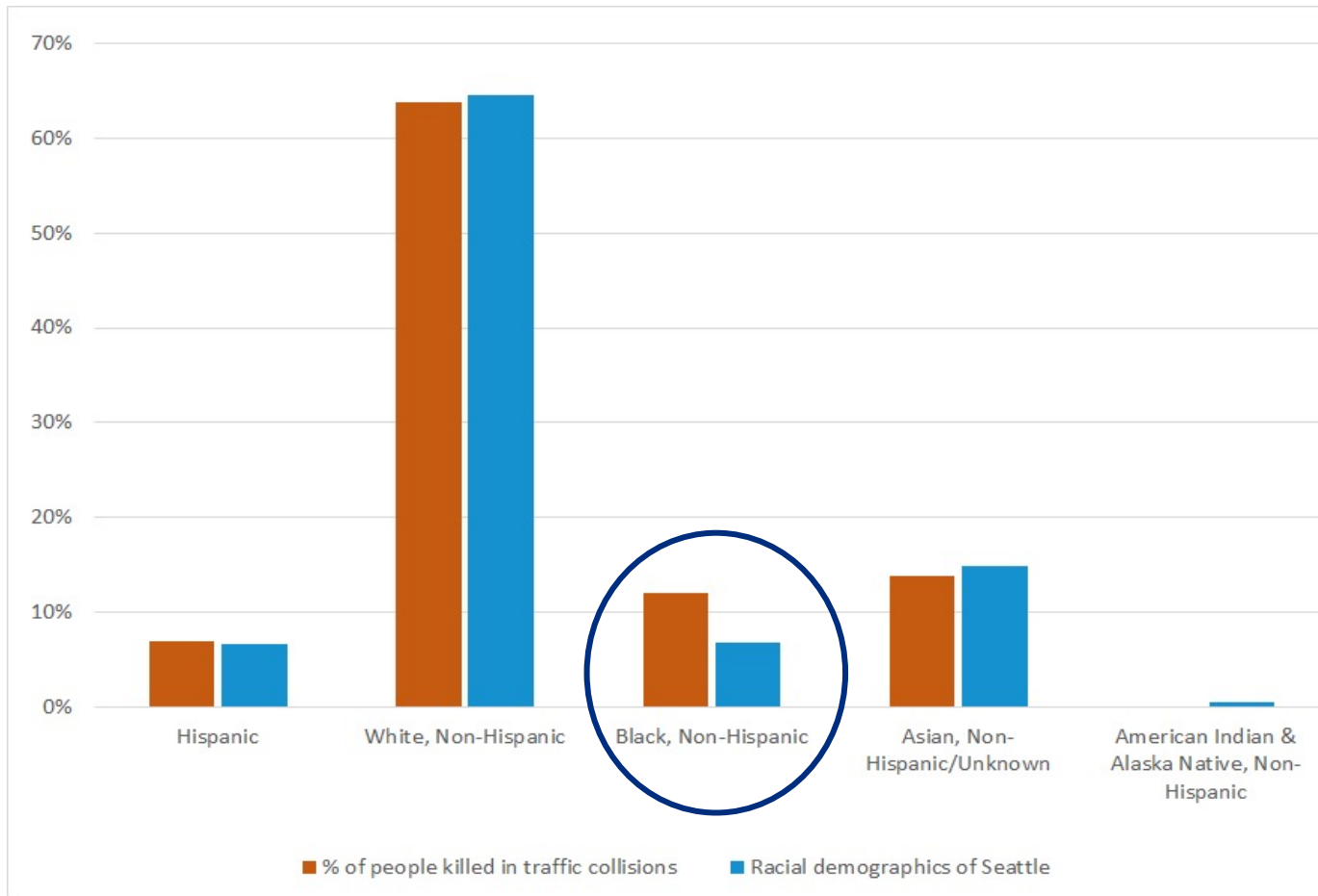


- ~20% of people walking who have been killed also likely unhoused/experiencing homelessness



# Closer to achieving racial equity?

*Fatal collisions and race, 2015-2018*

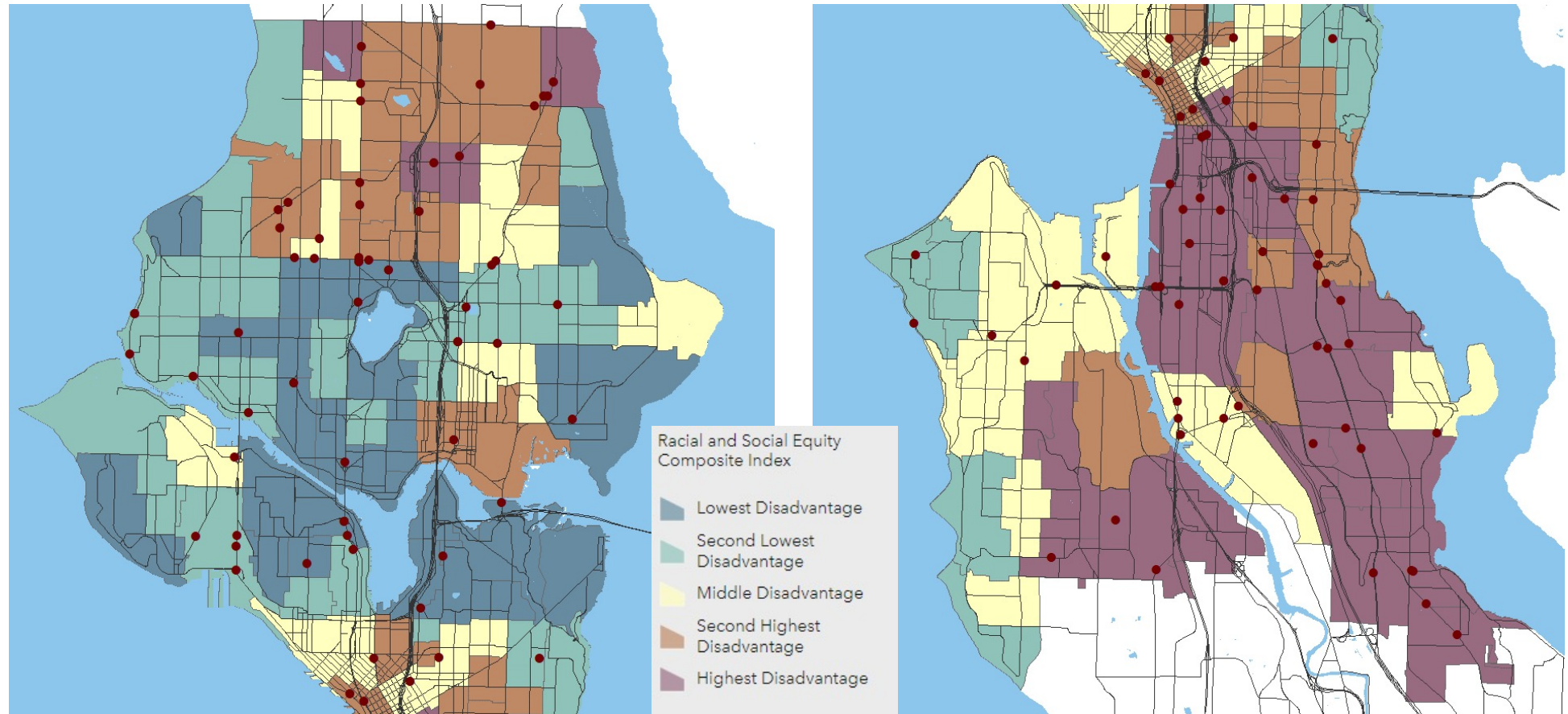


7% of Seattle population identifies as Black, but Black people make up 12% of those killed in collisions on city streets.

# Highly disadvantaged communities are more affected

In the past 5 years, 31% of traffic deaths were in the 20% of Census Tracts that make up the most highly disadvantaged communities.

Traffic deaths: ●





# Racial disparities in traffic enforcement fines and fees

2020 study commissioned by Seattle Office for Civil Rights:

- Analyzed 17 years of Seattle Municipal Court cases involving legal financial obligations (fines, fees, and other related costs imposed by court)
- 83% were traffic infractions
- In 2017, Black drivers in Seattle were issued 2.6 times more traffic infractions with legal financial obligations per capita than were White drivers

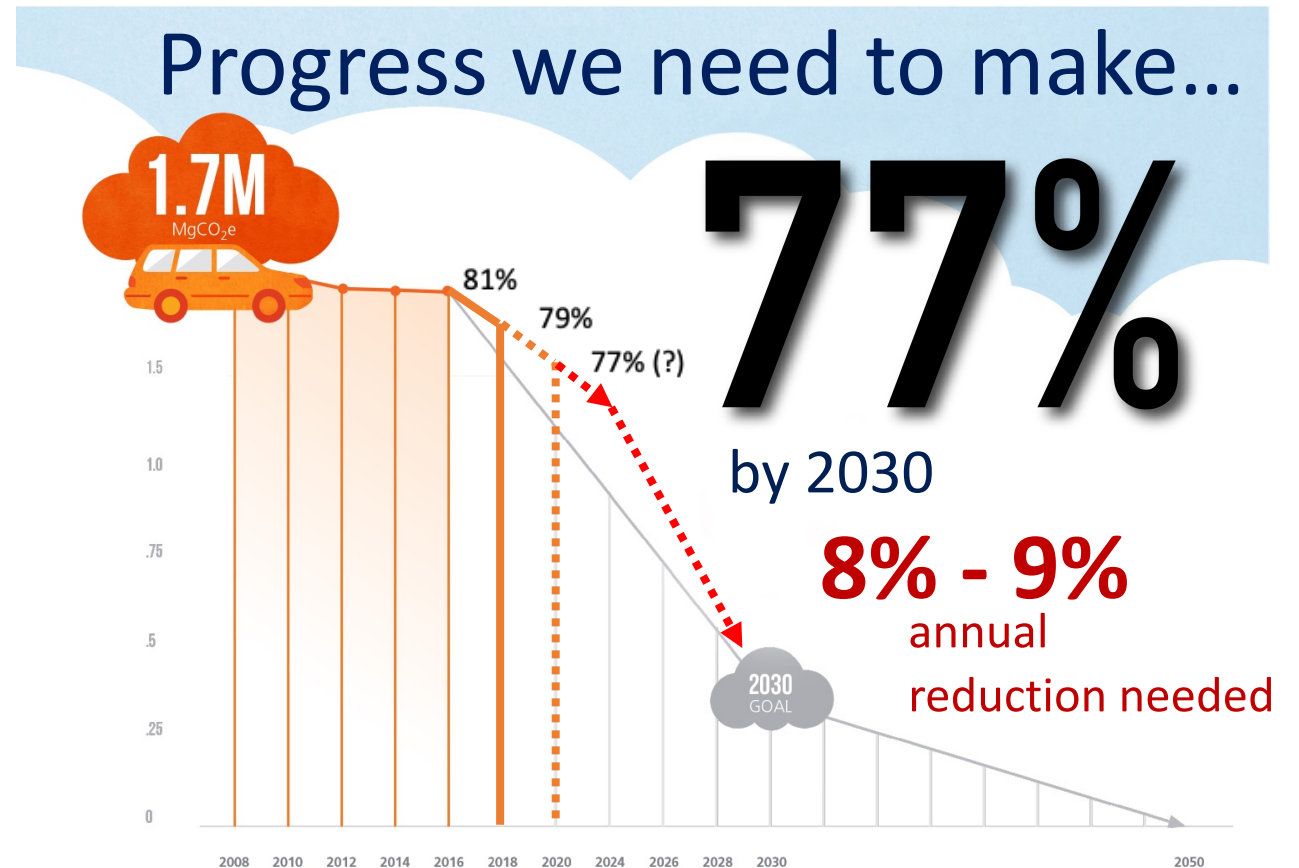
Sources:

[An Analysis of Court Imposed Monetary Sanctions in Seattle Municipal Courts, 2000-2017](#)

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-08-11/seattle-fines-and-fees-hit-black-residents-harder>

# Closer to achieving our climate goals?

To meet Seattle's climate *and* safety goals, we must redesign our roads to encourage and support more transit, walking, biking, and slower speeds so we can reduce reliance on single occupancy vehicles.



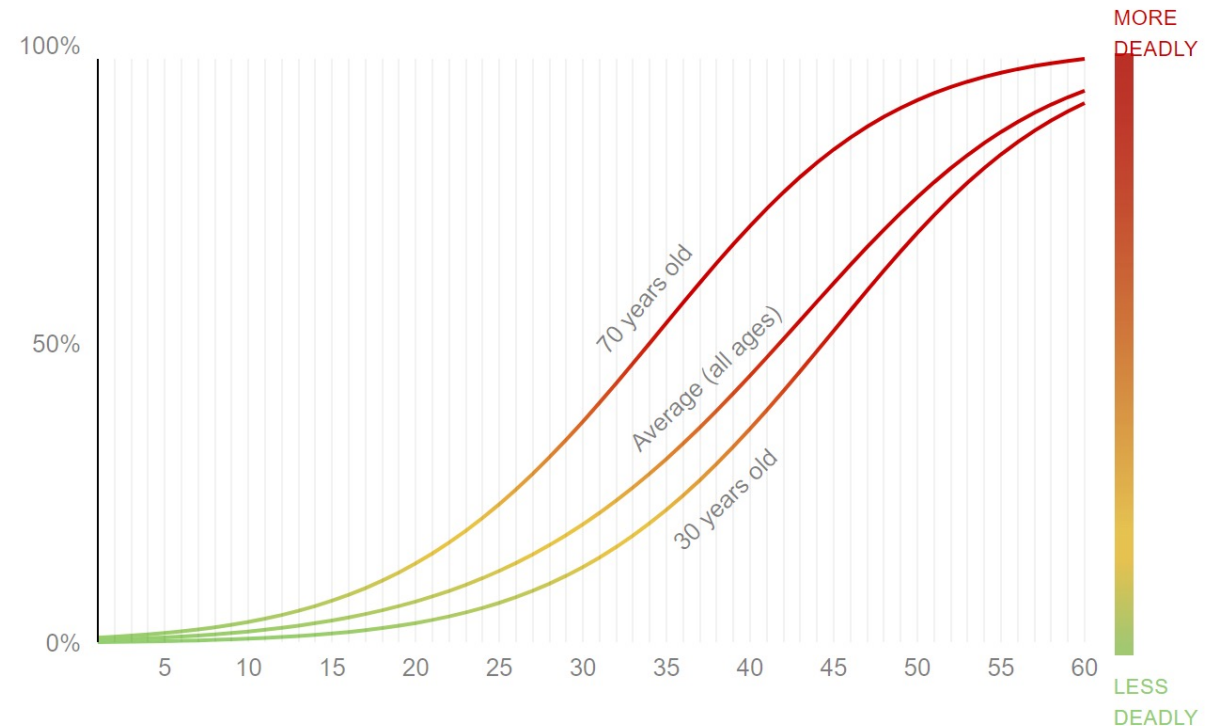


**Let's do more of what works.**

# Slowing down to save lives

- 90+% of Seattle arterials are 25 MPH; all non-arterials are 20 MPH
- Partnering with WSDOT on state-owned arterials
- Lowering citywide speed limits, initial findings:
  - 20% decrease in injury crashes
  - 54% decrease top-end speeders

*How vehicle speed affects survivability*



Graphic: ProPublica. Data: AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety report.

# Giving pedestrians a head start

- 30% of signalized intersections now have pedestrian head starts
- Surpassed 2020 goal (installed 300+); 60 more to come in 2021
- Reduction in turning collisions with people walking
  - 50% reduction for all injuries
  - 35% reduction in serious/fatal collisions





# Redesigning streets

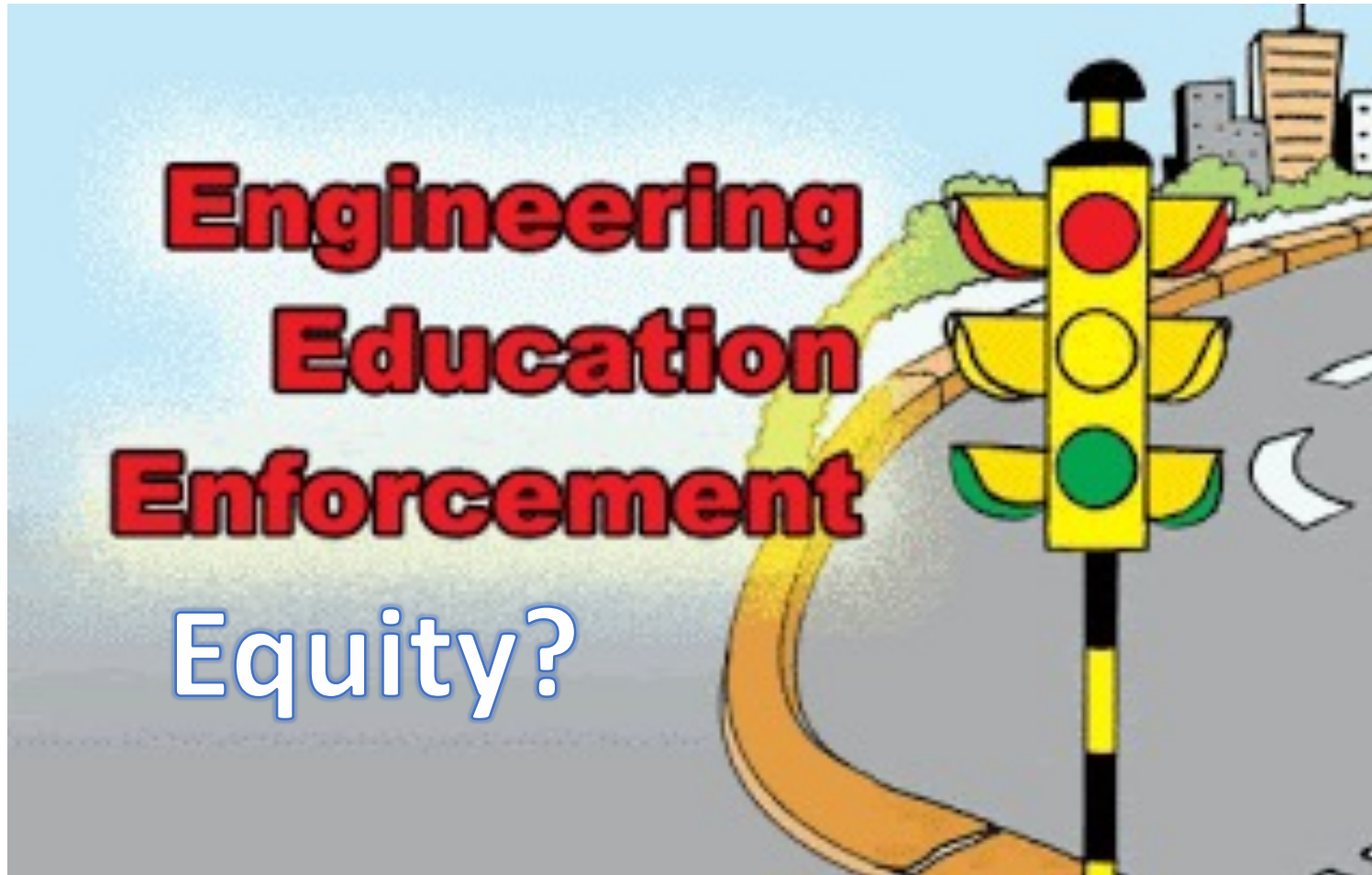
- Complete streets approach
- Using street design to manage speeds, reduce collisions, improve crossings
- Enhanced safety for all travelers

Street	ADT Before	ADT Change	Injury Collisions	Aggressive Speeding (40+ MPH)
Stone Way N	13,900	-6%	-33%	-75%
Fauntleroy Way SW	17,599	+0.3%	-72%	-13%
S Columbian Way	12,300	+15%	-19%	-46%
Nickerson Street	18,500	-1%	-20%	-93%
NE 125 <sup>th</sup> Street	13,600	+11%	-8%	-69%
N 130 <sup>th</sup> Street	13,298	+0.5%	-75%	-87%
Ellis Avenue S	9,855	-39%	-24%	-30%
Rainier Ave S (Phase 1)	21,600	-27%	-15%	-77%
NE 65 <sup>th</sup> St	14,390	+3%	-54%	-42%

*Before and after data for street redesigns in Seattle (ADT = average daily traffic)*

# Where would we like to go?

# Examining the traditional approach to traffic safety



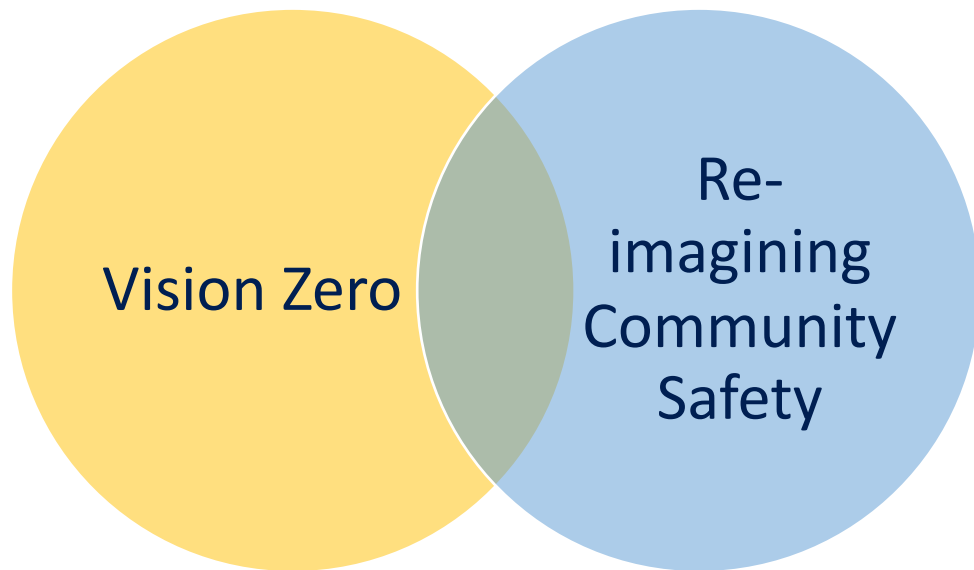
What have the consequences (intended and unintended) been?

Is this approach advancing Seattle's safety *and* racial equity goals?

How effective is each E?



# Grounding this work in racial equity



## **We are learning more about**

Disproportionate harm to Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) community members that has occurred by way of the traditional approach we've leaned on for traffic safety

## **Thinking about safety more holistically**

It's not just about being protected from harm of traffic crashes.

## **And hoping to move toward**

A new approach that can help us make progress on multiple city goals

# Vision Zero and enforcement

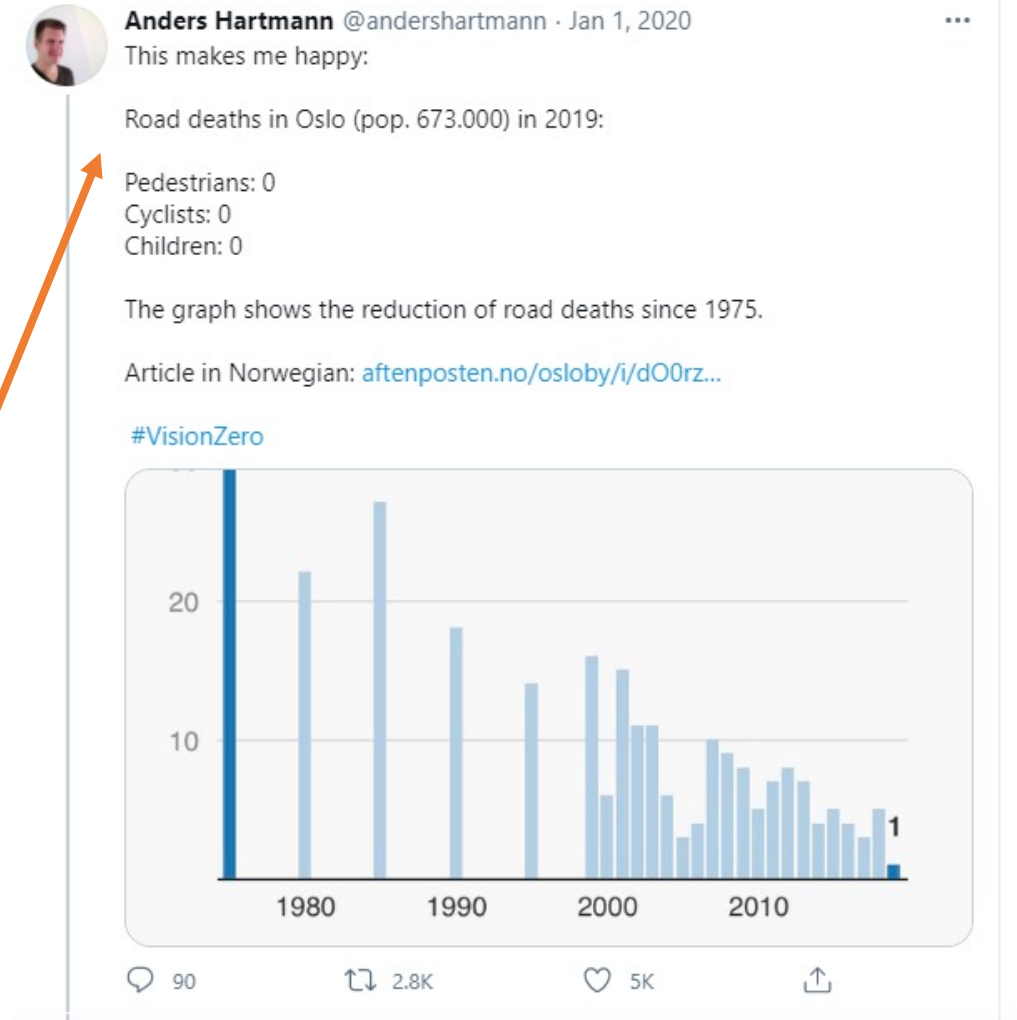
- Re-imagining community safety: evaluating our approach with a racial equity framework
- Racial Equity Toolkit: automated enforcement (red light, school safety cameras)
- Active coordination with SPD

Move toward *self-enforcing* street design



# Key challenges and opportunities

- Funding constraints
- Cost of crashes
- Do more of what's proven to work (less of what isn't)
- **It's possible.** Connection between safer streets, climate, affordability, racial equity





# Questions?

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[www.seattle.gov/visionzero](http://www.seattle.gov/visionzero)

