

City of Fremont Receives National Award for Leadership in Youth Road Safety

FREMONT, Calif. and CHAPEL HILL, N.C. (February 6, 2020) – The National Center for Safe Routes to School has named the city of Fremont as the 2020 recipient of the Vision Zero for Youth USA Leadership Award, based on the city’s impressive work to protect child and youth pedestrians and significantly reduce traffic fatalities and serious injuries for road users of all ages. The award recognizes cities that are leading the way in prioritizing children’s safety while also improving pedestrian and bicyclist safety for all ages through Vision Zero.

“As an early adopter of Vision Zero, the city of Fremont has taken impressive steps to integrate a focus on children and youth safety, especially around schools,” said Nancy Pullen-Seufert, Director, National Center for Safe Routes to School, University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center. “Through key partnerships and policies, the city has been strategic in implementing data sharing, funding, and engineering, enforcement, and education solutions. We are honored to present the Vision Zero for Youth Leadership Award to a city that is modeling best practices and comprehensive approaches that result in improved safety for youth and all people who walk and bike, as demonstrated by their impressive reduction in major crashes for all ages and specifically among youth.”

From 2013 to 2018, major crashes in Fremont were reduced by more than 50 percent. Among youth under 16 years of age, there was a more than 90 percent reduction in major crashes (for youth, from 12 major crashes in 2013-2015 to one in 2016-2018).

Following adoption of its Vision Zero policy, the city of Fremont integrated Safe Routes to School programming and assessed all city schools for ways to improve child safety. Recommendations for improving school area transportation infrastructure and public outreach resulted in “quick build” projects including upgraded crosswalks and new stop signs as well as rectangular rapid flashing beacons and buffered bike lanes that enhance routes to school. “Walk and roll” maps show recommended routes for walking and bicycling to each school. The city of Fremont engages diverse local partners and focuses on equitable access and plans to encourage student-led efforts in walking and biking. Public support for lowering speeds along arterials and near schools has also helped reduce crash frequency and severity in the last five years.

“Keeping our streets safe for everyone, especially the young residents in our community, through carefully planned, evidence-based solutions is an extremely important function of our City,” Fremont Mayor Lily Mei said. “This recognition from the National Center for Safe Routes to Schools further validates the incredible work that our City staff does every day in partnership with Fremont Unified School District to implement school safety improvement projects and traffic education programs.”

The Award is presented by the Vision Zero for Youth initiative, led by the National Center for Safe Routes to School with support from the FIA Foundation, the Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center, and the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center.

The city will formally receive the award from the National Center for Safe Routes to School on March 3 during its City Council meeting. The city of Fremont will also be featured in a case study highlighting Vision Zero for Youth efforts.

Past Vision Zero for Youth Leadership award recipients include New York City in 2019 and the City of Los Angeles in 2017.

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Vision Zero for Youth

Launched by the National Center for Safe Routes to School in 2016, the Vision Zero for Youth initiative encourages communities and elected officials to focus safety improvements and efforts to slow traffic speeds where children and youth travel. Starting with youth can be the spark that creates community support for a broader Vision Zero program to eliminate all traffic fatalities. The initiative includes resources, ideas for taking action, opportunities for city leaders to commit and national and international recognition programs. Support for the initiative is provided by the FIA Foundation, UNC Highway Safety Research Center, and the Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center. For more information about Vision Zero for Youth, visit visionzeroforyouth.org.

National Center for Safe Routes to School

Established in 2006, the National Center for Safe Routes to School helps communities change their culture around safe and active travel. Its role includes national coordination and technical assistance for US Walk to School Day and Bike to School Day, and providing tools, training, research and evaluation for safe walking and bicycling for children and youth. The National Center for Safe Routes to School served as US Federal Highway Administration's clearinghouse for the federal SRTS program for eleven years. It is located at the UNC Highway Safety Research Center, hsrc.unc.edu.

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