



Allentown

435 Hamilton Street
Allentown, Pa. 18101

Minutes - Final

City Council

Wednesday, April 2, 2025

6:00 PM

Council Chambers

Safe Streets for All Safety Action Plan

Special Council Meeting to Adopt Resolution 38, Approving the 2025 Safety Streets and Roads for all Action Plan

Roll Call

Present: 7 - Cynthia Mota, Daryl Hendricks, Ed Zucal, Natalie Santos, Ce-Ce Gerlach, Candida Affa, and Santo Napoli

RESOLUTIONS FOR FINAL PASSAGE (To be Voted On):

[15-7603](#)

R38

A resolution of the City of Allentown, approving the 2025 Safety Streets and Roads for all Action Plan for the City of Allentown and granting effectivity of the adopted plan.

Sponsors: Administration

Attachments: [R38 Safety Action Plan Adoption](#)

[Allentown SS4A Presentation final 4-1-25 .pdf](#)

[Vision Zero Doc.pdf](#)

[Resolution #31031.pdf](#)

Mr. Daryl Hendricks thanked Mr. Hanlon and stated Mr. Mayor and we have some special witnesses here tonight to testify to this.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated that he will be brief so that they can have the full time to make a presentation, but wanted to introduce the concept. The city received a grant from the US Department of Transportation as part of the bipartisan structure of law under the Safe Streets for All Program to develop a Safety Action Plan for the city of Allentown to make our roadways safer. He stated that they contracted with Michael Baker International to prepare that Plan for us that began just about a year ago. He stated that tonight, representatives from Michael Baker are going to do a formal presentation of the Plan to City Council. He stated that they will asked them to adopt the Plan. He stated that he was grateful to see Council President Hendricks and Councilman Zucal this morning at a Press Conference announcing the Plan and one of what he has called one of the worst intersections in the universe at the entrance to Lehigh Parkway.

He stated if you know, you know. He stated that it is not a great intersection. There are many other tough intersections in the city of Allentown. There are many other dangerous roadways in the city of the Allentown that have claimed the lives of too many of our residents over the years. They are prompted to take action and put ourselves in a position to make systemwide changes to the transportation network in the city of Allentown that will make it safer for all of our residents and anybody that wishes to visit the city of Allentown. The Plan was prepared under the department of Public Works with the expert guidance of Mark Shahda and his team, including Gabrielle Heiney, Jaime Delgado, and Megan Brehm. He stated that they are all here tonight and can answer additional questions, but he wants to hand it over to the team of Michael Baker International who helped us develop this Plan with help from the community. He stated that he will turn it over to Chris and said thank you.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks said thank you Mayor and stated good evening.

Mr. Chris Stanford stated that he is a professional Civil Engineer and Certified Planner with Michael Baker and he is here with Samantha McLean, their Community Engagement Lead to go through the summary of the Safety Action Plan. He stated that tonight, they are going to give them a presentation and go over the big picture of the issues, the process we use to complete the Plan over the last year or so and some examples of the conceptual improvements that are included in the full plan. He stated a recommendation to the city moving forward and some next steps, and obviously here to answer any questions you have. He stated to tell them about the big picture and why they are here. He stated between 2019 and 2023, there were over 8,000 and 600 crashes within the city and 284 of those were very serious injuries of fatalities. He stated that 69 of those high energy crashes were pedestrian related and 11 resulted in deaths on our city streets. He stated moving on, really it's just not about numbers, really right. It is about our families, about our friends and neighbors, it's about our children who use these streets on a daily basis. These are not just numbers, these are the real people and these incidents have tremendous impact on the people in the city. He stated that they need to do something about these crashes and these deaths that happen on our city streets. He stated that as they are all well aware, the city passed a Vision Zero Resolution in recent months and that really is to try and change the mindset around transportation. Traditionally, decades ago the traditional approach was based on the idea that the deaths on our highways and on our streets are inevitable. The driver must be a perfect driver and not make mistakes. It is really our job to prevent every crash, every fender bender and it is a responsibility of the system. It is really the individuals who that use this system, it is their responsibility to drive safely. If there was an issue on our roadways, it is just too expensive to change.

He stated that they all know that they can do better than that. The new vision is try to bring deaths on our roadway systems down to zero. He stated that is the Vision Zero philosophy. The idea is that deaths are preventable on our roadway system. That humans and people on the system make mistakes. They need to design the system to try to be a little more resilient and loud for people to make mistakes and not have those fatal consequences. They want to make these improvements across the whole system. It is not just leaving it up to the driver. It is not just leaving it up to the Planners and Engineers or the maintenance folks. It's everyone has a roll in here to make our streets safer. In working with a multi-disciplinary steering committee, they came up with an Action Plan Vision and our vision for Allentown is that Allentown streets are safe and accessible for all community members who live, works or visit Allentown no matter the mode of transportation or their background. He stated that by 2030, there are zero traffic fatalities and zero injuries in Allentown. He stated that is their vision and said that Samantha is going to go into the process they used to develop the Plan.

Ms. Samantha McLean thanked Chris and stated that they are going to go into the details of this Plan, but sometimes the process is often is just as important as the plan itself. She stated that they wanted to talk about how they came up with this Plan and there are really two components. The first being community engagement. The second is the data that they were able to source from a variety of sources. She stated going into Community Engagement and they really want to make sure that this Plan was grounded in the lives experiences of residents. She stated as Chris says, these are not numbers, these are people. They conducted a widespread outreach initiative using social media. She stated that it was actually on the slide before that. She stated social media, radio, business card drops at local stores and gathering places. An email blast over 100 stakeholders including some of the community organizations that are in the room tonight. She stated that they also did stakeholder engagement with those community organizations and spoke through the steering committee that met on a monthly basis to guide the process. Also, through targeted interviews and focus group conversations with organizations in both Allentown and a greater region that is working on these issues. In terms of the Community Engagement, she did a combo of online and in-person engagement. In terms of online engagement, they had a survey that received over 1,400 responses and 700 comments. They supplemented that online community engagement with in-person engagement doing six pop-up events and a variety of community events throughout the summer and the fall. The first set of the engagement events in the summer were to get the word out about survey and how people take the survey and they also wanted to share out in the fall what they did with the survey responses and where they were going with the Plan. It was an opportunity to regroup

and validate our findings. She stated that some of the biggest safety issues that they heard about on the surveys in addition to people being able to pinpoint specific locations that they had problems and challenges with. They are also wanting to get general feedback about our biggest safety challenges in Allentown and speedy motorists that was said at the Press Conference earlier today. Speedy motorists by far and large is the largest safety concern in Allentown, followed by off-road walking and biking trails, lack of bike lanes, as one of the students mentioned today. She stated issued at bus stops and lack of ADA access at some points. She stated at the next slides they had some comments from the survey that added additional context and really reminded them that these are people responding by every kind of point they mapped or response they were given or there are a lot of stories behind it. She stated that this just captures some of this we heard about. People being always being in a rush, a lack of enforcement, concerns about a lack of sidewalks in some places, street markings, etc. All this feedback really inspired their toolbox that of interventions and safety counter-measures that they are going to apply or that are mentioned in this plan. She stated that there are some recommendations of these counter measures on the screen right now that addresses community concerns that you just heard. The speeding in particular. In the top hand corner, they will go in order. You have like a speed board that is a vertical visual reminder to drivers to slow down and then on the top righthand corner you have a rectangular rapid flashing beacons or RRFBs. Once again, a visual or a vertical/visual reminder of a crosswalk so someone can slow down and allow pedestrians to cross. In the middle on the top row, you have an example of speed cushions, and a raised crosswalk is more like a horizontal, physical reminder to slow down, especially at key intersections. On the bottom left hand corner, is an example of a curb extension or a bump out. This brings the curb a little closer together to shorten the crossing distance. Oftentimes these curb extensions are applied in what they call an intersection daylighted. That is the image on the bottom left center where they are basically bringing the curb closer together and take away any obstacles, visual obstacles such as parked cars to make it easier to see the intersection. She stated and then finally on the bottom left hand side is an example of a road diet where you narrow lanes and take the existing road with and then you reconfigure those lanes and narrow the lanes which has been proven to slow traffic down. She stated that all of them are just examples of how they took what they learned from the community and really used that to guide some of the interventions that Chris is going to talk about in a bit.

Mr. Chris Stanford stated as Samantha mentioned, the second part of the process is looking at the data. He stated as they mentioned, they took five years of PennDot data with crash data in the city and basically developed a Heat Map as you see on this screen. Low areas of crashes are shown in

blue and higher incidences of crashes are show in red and yellow. He stated that it just helps them visually understand where the focus of where the crashes are. Where they can focus their efforts for improvements. He stated that on the next slide, you will see the high injury network which is basically a small percentage of the streets in the city where the majority of the serious injuries and fatalities are happening. Just on the small portion of the city's streets over 3,000 crashes happen in that time period between 2019 and 2023. He stated that you can see a small percentage of roadways represent a large percentage of the crashes that are happening. He stated on the next slide, they will see a slightly different version of this. Again, a high injury network. He stated those purple lines there, represent only six percent of the city streets in Allentown. He stated only six percent, but they represent 49 percent of the crashes. He stated that they can see if they have addressed improvements on these small percentage of roads. He stated only six percent then they can really have a positive impact on a high amount, high majority of the crashes in the city. He asked where were these roadways that were the issues. He stated on the next slide, you will see the top five corridors that really had the most issues from a crash perspective. He stated that they are talking about the Tilghman Streets/Union Boulevard Corridor where it represented almost 16 percent of the crashes on that network. He stated that then they had Hamilton Street, Hamilton Boulevard, and next is Number 2. He stated East Hamilton into Hanover Avenue, American Parkway and Lehigh Street. These top five crashes represented over a third of the crashes that happened in the city. Again, if we want to look at the roadways they really need to focus on first, to have the best impact, the best positive impact on crashes. He stated that this is going to be where they are going to focus their attention first. He stated just some more information about how they are doing with crashes and how safety in the city is going. He stated while they can see, unfortunately, they are trending in the wrong direction. In 2019, they only had 37 high injury crashes. He stated 2023, they had almost double. They were up to 72. He stated as they can see, the trend is going in the wrong direction. They really need to make improvements to stop this trend and try to get them back to zero as indicated in the Zero Vision philosophy. He stated again, next more information as they were doing their safety analysis. They are trying to understand what kind of crashes are happening and where they are happening. He stated on the left about 57 percent of the crashes are happening at mid block locations and 43 percent of the crashes are actually happening at signalized intersections or other types of intersections. He stated that they need to look at both locations again, they need to look at a little more focused at the mid block locations. He asked what kind of crashes are they talking about. He asked who is involved. He stated as they can see 93 percent of the crashes are motor vehicles, with only about seven involving bicycles, pedestrians. He stated however, when you are talking about serious

injuries and fatalities, our vulnerable users would which are the walkers and the bikers which represents 31 percent of those high injury crashes. Obviously, where there is an incident with a motor vehicle and a pedestrian, the pedestrian is going to lose out in that situation. He stated that they really need to pay more attention to taking care of our pedestrians and bicyclists when they are looking at high injury crashes in the city. He asked how are we going to do this. He stated so just for this presentation they are going to do a few examples of how they approach this in the Plan. He stated that he see folks can look into the Plan in more detail to see some of the more details and the roadways they looked into. He stated first, they are going to look at Tilghman Street. He stated that obviously, Tilghman was at the top of the list there. The injury network and what they did in the Plan, they basically looked at the existing conditions and try to identify one of the biggest challenges on the corridor. He stated on the Tilghman Street corridor, obviously they have a lot of pedestrian and motorcycle crashes. They have a lot of issues with intersection visibility. He stated as Samantha mentioned and you can see the photo in the middle, you can see people parked right up to the stop signs and right up to the edge of the intersections which blocks you and creates blind spots for people crossing and other motor vehicles that are at a four way intersection. He stated that is one of the issues there. They also have to look at and again, we have crashes on un-signalized intersections and mid block locations along the corridor. He asked how are we going to address this. He stated as Samantha mentioned there is a lot of tools in the tool box that can be the right tool for the right problem, right. He stated that they have a lot of different issues so they have to come up with the right solutions for these different problems. He stated some of the solutions that they are suggesting are a high visibility crosswalk. He stated that he wants the big piano keys style, kind of crosswalks, not just this thin white lines that go transverse across a road. He stated that they need better lighting at the intersections in their crosswalks. He stated that they definitely needs to do that corner clearance with the intersection day lighting. They are potentially looking at curb extensions and potentially using flashlights and beacons as well to address some of these concerns. He stated just to give them an example, the city is already doing this. He wants to give a good example of this sought of treatment that sits in the Arts Walk. He stated that they may have seen the rapid flashing beep in there. You already have a curb extension on the left. There is good lighting here, pedestrian scale as well as the overhead lighting and there is a decorative crosswalk in this particular location to raise the awareness of the motor vehicles to this actual crossing location. These are the examples of the what things we could employ on Tilghman Street. He stated moving on to the Hamilton Street corridor, some of the challenges that were identified through the Engagement and the data is speeding, intersection conflict points and a lack of safe pedestrian crossing locations. He stated so again, what are

some of the tools that they can use to address those. They can look at better visibility and crosswalks, better lighting, using the beacons, potentially using a razed island in the middle of the road to address pedestrian crossing locations. He stated one big tool in the toolbox are modern roundabouts. He stated that they will look at these with a little more detail. One of the locations they are probably aware of that is a little bit of a challenge is the Hamilton Street and Ott Street intersection. They have a number of roadways all coming together and kind of a nuke screwed intersection configuration. A lot of pedestrian crossings. Things near the park. He asked how do we address something like this. One potential pretty major intervention they can do here to improve safety is a modern roundabout. He stated that they can reconfigure the intersection to do traffic calming, the improve safety, to improve pedestrian crossings, and also serve as a great gateway to the city as well. He stated as you can see on the lower right there is a rendering of what that ramrod would look like. He asked why would we want to use a roundabout. Roundabout are designed for slower speeds. They are designed for 25 to 30 miles per hour. Intrinsically all the speeds are slower so if there is any kind of crash, it is less severe. There is significantly less conflict points. You can see these images here on the right. A conventional intersection has 32 places where vehicles can conflict and 24 places where pedestrians can conflict with vehicles. A roundabout only has only eight conflict points for vehicles and pedestrian points. Intrinsically, the design of it makes it safer. Again, it has islands that allows for a safer pedestrian crossing and they have all proven tons of tons of studies that show these are reduced number of crashes and severity. He stated as he mentioned there is a traffic calming influence because of the slower speeds for the design. He stated believe it or not, they actually function better from a traffic flow perspective as well then a traffic signal. He stated so a real good tool that will really potentially use throughout the city. He stated moving on to the next slide, they had another suggestion about improving pedestrian crossings. Unfortunately, they were aware that there is a pedestrian killed at this location near 21st Street and Hamilton near the bridge. They also has an existing trail that comes out of Cedar Creek Park and there is a proposed trail that is going to go out to Union Terrace. This will be a great location for a formalized island crossing for pedestrians. He stated moving on to the last corridor is the Union Boulevard area. He stated that in this location, they have a very overly wide roadway and the lane configuration changes significantly throughout the corridor. It varies from two lanes to four lanes, back to two lanes throughout the corridor. He stated that they have seen a lot of speeding because of this overly wide roadway and again a lot of the issues with pedestrian crossings. Moving on to the next slide, what are the solutions that they are going to look at here. One idea is a road diet and stated as Samantha mentioned it is reconfiguring width of the road, narrowing lanes, potentially adding bike lanes and/or bus lanes on this corridor and making the lane

configuration more consistent throughout the corridor. Improvements such as curb extensions with clearing out the corners with day lighting. Again, the improvements with the crosswalks, lighting, flashing beacons as well as roundabouts as potential tools in this corridor. On the next slide, they are aware of a crazy intersection on Airport Road and Union Boulevard. It is almost a six legged intersection with all the approaches there. A lot of very wide curb radiuses that increase speeds. A lot of issues with pedestrian crossings in the existing conditions. He stated so again, looking at the next slide and again, the roundabout would have been another good solution at this location to deal with a lot of the issues that were identified in the Plan. He stated moving on to their goals and recommendations.

Ms. Samantha McLean stated that Chris is really the brain behind a lot of the Concept Plans and a lot of the physical improvements and they worked with the at the steering committee to come up with a set of goals and a lot of recommendations that work in tandem with those physical improvements. She stated that she will go over those goals and recommendations now. She stated that there are six goals, the first being to implement everything that Chris just talked about. Implement those proven safety counter measures system wide in those targeted locations along the high injury network. The second goal here is to integrate the safe systems approach and the Vision Zero approach into all aspects the city operations. It is being really intentional with how each of the departments, how each of the decision making bodies reviews and looks at aspects of their job, and making sure it aligns with the Safe System approach. The third goal is to utilize a monitor and evaluation framework to track the effectiveness of the implementation which they will talk about in a little bit. Using a dashboard or some sort of Annual Report mechanism to report back on how these interventions have worked and the fourth goal is to foster strong partnerships with residents and regional collaborations and for planning and funding. Working with all the residents that gave them feedback throughout this process and making sure that the continue to be in the loop. She is also engaging the regional stakeholders such a LANTA and the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission to make sure they are partnering any kind of funding opportunity. The fifth goal is to expand connectivity of the multimodal network so they have some bits and pieces there. She stated that they are really making sure they are connected in an integrated system. She stated lastly to create a multimodal network that supports the shift from driving to non-motorized forms of transportation and by expanding that. She stated then to support those goals and to realize those goals, they have over 20 recommendations on the screen there are a few examples that are split into four different focus areas. She stated system wide improvements. Those are physical improvements, process improvements or process and policies. Collaboration opportunities and then progress and transparency recommendations. She brought a copy of

the Plan today just to show you in multiple pieces. There is a lot here and they are happy to answer any specific questions about these recommendations. She encouraged them to take a look and read through if they have specific interests in any of these recommendations and they can answer any questions as well.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks stated alright.

Mr. Chris Stanford stated a couple more next steps. In a couple of more next steps, one was done.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks stated thank you very much for your presentation. He stated that it was quite extensive and opened it up to his colleagues for any questions.

Mr. Michael Hanlon stated that he has a few more slides.

Mr. Chris Stanford stated that he has a couple more things for you. He stated that one more thing that they wanted to remind everyone is when things are already happening, part of this process, the mayor actually helped them identify a funding opportunity and worked with the team to do a grant application and actually won \$384,000 for the city to do a temporary quick build project. It is going to include traffic calming improvements on Jefferson Street. He stated that they talked about those at the Press Conference this morning. He stated that this will be an interim step before a full blown design project gets going in the next couple of years. They are also doing speed cushions on 12 roadways, near schools and parks as well as some intersections lines to clear out some of the corners on the high injury network. This is the project that the city's staff is working on now as a function of this study and hopefully will inform everything that they have done and all the recommendations they have moving forward. He stated really, when you go through the last slide and really looking for a few things for them to help them with tonight. He stated again the very first thing is to approve a Resolution and adopt a Plan and to help advance that demonstration project that he just talked about and to share it with the city residents through the website and the dashboard. The ultimate goal is assuming federal funding is still there for this program, there is a lot of finding that is in the program from Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill for a more implementation. He stated again, later on hopefully, they will have an opportunity to apply for more grants, whether at the federal level or state or local level. He stated working with LVPC to get some of these projects on the transportation tip and on the transportation improvement plan. Working with PennDot to get some of the larger Projects implemented and work with city staff to look at the Resurfacing Plan. This year and next year to see if any of these roads will be on the slate for resurfacing and maybe

some of the recommendations from the SS4A Community Incorporated into those projects. He stated at this point, he will be happy to answer any questions.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks stated thank you again. He asked if there were any questions.

Ms. Ce Ce Gerlach stated that she knows that they are running behind, but she had a quick question. She stated that since they are not the only municipality that has the Safe Streets For All designation, is there evidence that making these changes in the in these other municipalities is working.

Mr. Chris Stanford stated yeah, the trend is in the right direction. Obviously, this is a very strong first step for the city to refocus on safety and have the opportunity to apply for a lot of funding to implement these improvements. He stated that this is definitely a step in the right direction. They have seen other municipalities like Bethlehem, they got over \$10 million for Broad Street improvements. Lancaster got \$12 million for their improvements.

Ms. Ce Ce Gerlach stated that she guesses what she is getting at is a lot of times government throw money around and then nothing happens. You don't actually get a result. She guesses she would be interested if other municipalities who already done this and she did not get the chance to read Philly's yet from 2024 for their Annual Report. Is it working. Is it putting day lighting in the flashing lights is actually working or is it just spending a bunch of money and Press Conferences and nothing really changes.

Mr. Chris Stanford stated that these are proven safety counter measures. These are things that have been used to improve work in other locations. Lot's of studies back up their effectiveness. They are relying on time tested things that have worked in other places and trying to make a toolbox a tool that the Public Works department can use to make things better in the city. They are used in a lot of other places and proven to be very effective.

Ms. Ce Ce Gerlach stated ok, she guesses her only other thing would be for the day lighting since it says that it is going to be happening on Tilghman Street. She is looking at different versions of what day lighting can look like. She stated like planters and like those.

Mr. Chris Stanford stated flex posts.

Ms. Ce Ce Gerlach stated yes, flex posts. She stated that flex posts are cheaper than planters.

Mr. Chris Stanford stated true. He stated that he thinks that again, this quick build project is to try to get things in the ground quickly to make sure it is going to work. He stated not to spend tons of money on it, but like try to work out the bugs and how they would work here in Allentown. Likely, if you want to get things done quickly and relatively cheaply, probably you will use the flex post first. If you say it works well, then maybe you are talking about doing a curb extension and doing the planters and the more permanent improvements.

Ms. Ce Ce Gerlach stated that means the Parking Authority would have to adjust their signage. The interesting thing with day lighting is technically it is illegal to park within 20 - 30 feet of a stop sign already and at an intersection. These are areas that technically, people should not be parking there now. They are basically parking illegally. It is basically putting physical things in the way so it makes it difficult for people to park in those places. They are not supposed to be parking in the first place.

Ms. Ce Ce Gerlach stated that she would think that they would and have no evidence that it feels like there are some signs that the Parking Authority. She stated ok. She stated also with the bike lanes and she has seen in other municipalities like more so out west, they have really good bike lanes where they have like a median. They have like their own.

Ms. Candida Affa entered the meeting via Teams at 6:30:44 PM

Mr. Chris Stanford stated protected bike lane, yes.

Ms. Ce Ce Gerlach stated that they are just going to do a quicker one where they are just on the street.

Mr. Chris Stanford stated that the ideal would be detected bike lanes. He stated that they are working with the city on a bike plan now. He stated separate grant and separate project. Those are some of the things that they would look into potentially on other roadways. The upgrading existing bike lanes or any new bike lane, they would make recommendations for protected facilities.

Mayor Matt Tuerk asked could he add Councilperson Gerlach, one of the things that prohibits their ability to invest in smart infrastructure for bike lanes in particular is state law that prohibits municipalities from creating something called a parking protected bike lane where you will be able to shift parking over and put the bike lane between parked cars and the sidewalk as opposed to putting them and asked do you follow.

Ms. Ce Ce Gerlach stated yeah. He stated that it is presently illegal in the

state of Pennsylvania. You have to be parked within 12 inches of a curb. He stated that they are working to advocate with the state legislature to change that. He stated that he knows that Kat and Scott are on this too and building an organization around those kinds of legislation changes. It is part of what they need to do and part of a Safety Action Plan in the city of Allentown is to advocate for legislative changes. It allows them to make things safer in our city. Ms. Ce Ce Gerlach stated alright, thank you and said that is all she got. Thank you.

Dr. Cynthia Mota stated that she knows that they are pressed for time, but rally quick what are you guys planning to do on the southside, again.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated that the Press Conference that they held today was on Jefferson Street which is the entrance to Lehigh Parkway on the southside.

Dr. Cynthia Mota stated yes, a lot of people get into an accident there. She stated that she was one of them.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated correct. He stated that there is a \$1.9 million Automated Light Enforcement grant from PennDot that they would use to do a road diet, to make things safer in that part of the city. He stated that you can

Yes: 7 - Cynthia Mota, Daryl Hendricks, Ed Zucal, Natalie Santos, Ce-Ce Gerlach, Candida Affa, and Santo Napoli

Enactment No: 31031

ADJOURNED: 6:38 PM