



Safe Routes  
PARTNERSHIP  
*Active Paths for Equity & Health*

# MOVING DC TO ZERO

Championing  
Community and Change  
East of the River



## Acknowledgements

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@2019 Safe Routes Partnership





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# INTRODUCTION

Making sure that community members can travel safely by foot, bus, or bike to get to where they need to go is an essential part of a healthy community. As a result, it is important that the concept of Vision Zero – designing streets and community culture so that no one dies or is severely injured in traffic collisions – be fully implemented in every part of District of Columbia. Communities in Wards 7 and 8 are especially vulnerable to traffic related injuries and fatalities.

Nearly half of all traffic safety fatalities in the first six months of 2019 occurred East of the River. Residents note unequitable distribution of resources and lack of robust infrastructure compared to West of the River neighborhoods. Transportation safety disparities across the city show that Vision Zero is as much about equity as it is about eliminating traffic deaths.

The Safe Routes Partnership spent a year partnering with communities in Wards 7 and 8 to implement transportation safety initiatives in support of the District's Vision Zero plan. The goal was to identify and address barriers to reducing injuries and fatalities while providing resources focused on creating safe streets, protecting vulnerable users, and preventing dangerous driving. We worked closely alongside residents, community partners, District agencies, and schools to improve safety where people live, learn, and play. This toolkit provides an overview of our collective work with tips and resources for developing Vision Zero initiatives East of the River. We explain our community engagement strategy, spotlight school champions, celebrate success stories, and offer recommendations for equitable transportation change.

## The Safe Routes Partnership

Founded in 2005, the mission of the Safe Routes Partnership is to advance safe walking and bicycling to and from schools, to improve the health and well-being of kids of all races, income levels, and abilities, and to foster the creation of healthy communities for everyone.

The Safe Routes Partnership is a nonprofit organization that improves the quality of life for communities by promoting healthy living, safe infrastructure, and physical activity with a focus on walking and biking. We advance policies and increase funding for active transportation and healthy, equitable communities; support Safe Routes to School program development and implementation; and share our deep expertise and learn from the field through resources that are accessible to everyone.

The Safe Routes Partnership seeks equitable solutions to transportation challenges. We celebrate the many assets of low-income and communities of color and believe in the power of residents as change-makers. We understand that due to systemic disinvestment, low-income and communities of color face more dangers to safe walking and biking than other communities. We commit to supporting initiatives that benefit all demographic groups, with particular attention to ensuring safe, healthy, and fair outcomes for people of color.



# VISION ZERO: A MOVEMENT TOWARDS SAFER STREETS

Vision Zero is an international traffic safety campaign aimed at reducing serious injuries and eliminating traffic fatalities. Started in Sweden in 1997, Vision Zero has been adopted by dozens of US cities, including New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, Seattle, and Portland.



The initiatives press for dynamic changes to how we plan and use our streets. It calls for a shift away from car-centered street design to one that is safe, accessible, and friendly for all mobility users.

This may look like installing more dedicated bus lanes and protected bike lanes, building outdoor spaces like parklets and public plazas, and creating car-free zones in certain areas of a city. Vision Zero is an ambitious plan and will require courage and compromise for it to be fully realized.

In 2016, the District of Columbia adopted a Vision Zero goal to end traffic fatalities by 2024. With full support of Mayor Muriel Bowser and under the direction of the District of Columbia Department of Transportation (DDOT), Vision Zero is now in its fourth year of implementation.

The District's Vision Zero plan commits to:

- **Creating Safe Streets**
- **Protecting Vulnerable Users**
- **Preventing Dangerous Driving**
- **Being Transparent and Responsive**

Vision Zero is especially important for communities East of the River. Wards 7 and 8 have the highest number of traffic fatalities in the District. At least half of all traffic deaths in the city as of July 1, 2019 occurred in or around Ward 8's Anacostia neighborhood. Speeding, inadequate infrastructure, and limited transit options present dangers for all road users. People on foot step into unpainted crosswalks, people on bike struggle to find protected lanes that connect to local trails, and students navigate high speed roads while traveling to school. New mobility options, including the uncertain future of autonomous vehicles, present unique challenges to an already complicated streetscape.

Community concerns are growing as traffic fatalities increase East of the River. Residents East of the River note the difference between stalled safety improvement projects in their neighborhoods versus swiftly completed projects West of the River. They recall years-old traffic studies that have not yet reached implementation and 311 requests met with little to no follow up. In communities where the most number of people are killed in traffic-related incidents, infrastructure changes seem slowest to arrive. Years of inaction have bred feelings of distrust, frustration, and apathy towards government agencies.



Vision Zero presents the opportunity to create a new narrative by investing in a place and its people. East of the River is home to people walking, driving, bicycling, scooting, and riding public transit. There are DC natives, newcomers, and the largest population of African American residents in the city. East of the River is also home to some of the District's fiercest transportation advocates. They develop traffic safety solutions, organize community initiatives, liaise with elected officials, support vulnerable road users, and honor those whose lives have been lost to traffic fatalities. Their backgrounds span generations and their footprints stretch from far Southwest to the edges of Northeast.

As Vision Zero initiatives develop across the city, District agencies must listen to and learn from residents and community advocates East of the River. The city will reach its Vision Zero goal by working in collaboration and equitably distributing resources to communities most impacted by traffic-related injuries and deaths.



# OUR PROJECT

The Safe Routes Partnership designed and implemented *Our Streets, Our Stories*, a project to advance Vision Zero safety initiatives East of the River. We began with hiring a Community Engagement Manager to lead the project and provide in-person technical assistance to our partners. Our Community Engagement Manager centered her work on curiosity and community connectedness.

She spent the first several months of the project exploring the history and culture of Wards 7 and 8 through online research, neighborhood walks, talking with residents, attending community meetings, and visiting a range of local cultural institutions. From this research, our Community Engagement Manager created a project framework using art and storytelling as a primary means of community engagement.



We then created a school prioritization matrix to select project partners. Prioritization was based on a number of factors – District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) vs. public charter schools, Extended Year schools, percentage of students receiving free and reduced lunch, traffic fatality data, number of students living within a mile of campus, feeder patterns, and anecdotal evidence.

Feeder patterns and anecdotal evidence weighed heavily in our considerations, along with campuses in close proximity to previous DDOT traffic studies. Schools were broken down into tiers based on these factors. We selected Aiton Elementary School, Neval Thomas Elementary School, and Kelly Miller

Middle School as our Ward 7 school partners. We selected Garfield Elementary School and KIPP Heights DC as our Ward 8 school partners. Each school showed a keen interest in bolstering their transportation safety efforts and a willingness to engage in creative solutions.

Our Community Engagement Manager also built relationships with several local organizations to support project activities. Primary collaborators were Discover Traffic Gardens, Safe Kids DC, and Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA). Our organizations regularly designed and implemented events across partner schools and other community gatherings. Additional project partners included the DC Public Library, Gearin' Up Bicycles, Capital Bikeshare, Project Create, George Mason University, and a number of local ANCs. This project was also supported by a number of residents who offered their time, energy, and expertise to our Vision Zero efforts.

# OUR SCHOOL PARTNERS

Our school engagement activities worked to engage students, parents, and others to improve traffic safety knowledge, increase understanding and awareness of Vision Zero, and create pathways between the school community and DDOT to enable two-way communication about traffic safety needs and DDOT actions.

## What is a Traffic Garden?

A traffic garden, sometimes known as a safety town, is a miniature streetscape where students can learn the rules of the road in a fun, safe environment. Aiton Elementary School and Neval Thomas Elementary School are home to the District's first traffic gardens.



At Aiton and Neval Thomas, we partnered with Discover Traffic Gardens and George Mason University on a series of Vision Zero events. Our events built upon and celebrated the installation of two new traffic gardens at each school. The traffic gardens support District of Columbia Public Schools' bike education program where all second grade students learn bike skills and road safety. Fionnuala Quinn of Discover Traffic Gardens led the design and installation while George Mason conducted research on the impact of traffic gardens on early childhood students. Our "Vision Zero Heroes" event series brought the school community together to learn about the traffic garden project and contribute to the design. During school-wide events, students participated in design charrettes to provide feedback on the traffic garden model, created reflective superhero wristbands to raise awareness about pedestrian visibility, and shared favorite memories of traveling to school. Parents and caregivers attended art-making sessions to help create bike education curriculum materials for Pre-K teachers to use in their classrooms. In those sessions, we shared in-depth information about the traffic garden project and learned about the biking habits of parents and their children.

Our collaboration with Discover Traffic Gardens showed the importance to creating spaces to play, learn, share, and connect with one another. We wrapped up our project activities with traffic garden ribbon-cutting ceremonies at each school. Students at Neval Thomas took

an inaugural ride around the course with DCPS Superintendent Ferebee and shared their excitement with local reporters. At Aiton's ribbon cutting ceremony, a father commented that helping to create bike education curriculum materials made him feel more connected to the traffic garden. He also spoke about the traffic garden being a legacy for the school and an asset for the entire community. DC public schools now serve as national model for innovative traffic safety education.

Our partnership at Garfield began at a community meeting to address serious safety concerns along Alabama Avenue. At the start of the 2018-2019 school year, several pedestrians had been hit in the crosswalk right in front of Garfield's main entrance. These pedestrians included children and adults. After seeing concerned social media posts, our Community Engagement Manager attended a community meeting where she learned that families and staff at Garfield had been advocating for safety improvements along Alabama Avenue for years. She shared Safe Routes to School resources at a follow-up meeting and connected the school to other support services at DDOT, Safe Kids DC, and WABA. After ongoing advocacy, a flashing beacon light was installed at the crosswalk in December 2018. We celebrated with an after-school appreciation event for Garfield's transportation advocates. In May 2019, we collaborated with Safe Kids DC, WABA, MPD, and Project Create on a series of bike education events for Bike to School Month.

Students participated in a bike rodeo, created bike safety flags and nameplates, and got fitted for helmets. Garfield capped off their year by receiving DDOT's Trailblazer Award for their Bike to School Day efforts.

We connected with KIPP Heights DC as a part of Walk to School Day. Prior to the event, we completed a walk audit with Safe Kids DC as part of a pilot test of the Safety Rating for Schools Mobile Application. The app helped us determine safety ratings at four intersections around the school and provided infrastructure recommendations. We shared this information in a follow-up session with the school administration. In October 2018, we celebrated Walk to School Day with KIPP students, staff, and families. As part of the celebration, we created a community graffiti wall where participants left kind messages for the people who keep them safe as they travel around their community.

Our Community Engagement Manager noticed an opportunity to involve older students in traffic safety efforts. We approached Kelly Miller Middle School in Ward 7 because of their commitment to civic engagement and their connection to Aiton and Neval Thomas as feeder schools. The principal suggested an afterschool program as an effective forum for working with students. Our Community Engagement Manager led afterschool workshops centered on transportation safety during the fall semester. She spent the first sessions leading art-themed transportation activities to learn about the students' concerns and safety solutions. Towards the end of the program, students created reflective scarves to sell in the school store. Each scarf had a customized apparel tag with information on Vision Zero and a street safety tip. This partnership revealed a need for creative, hands-on engagement strategies to get older youth interested in Vision Zero. It also laid the foundation for our new Safe Routh for Youth project that prioritizes youth Vision Zero initiatives.

Outside of school partnerships, our Community Engagement Manager led activities at a number of outreach events in order to build awareness of VZ and deepen

understanding of Ward 7 and 8 traffic safety concerns. We tabled at Gearin' Up Bicycles bike repair clinics and the First Annual DC Bike Fair. Our Community Engagement Manager regularly attended and shared information at Ward 8 traffic safety meetings. One output from the Ward 8 traffic safety meetings was a successful Parklands Safety Awareness Day where student safety patrols worked alongside MPD and community members to direct traffic during morning arrival. Resources for project activities can be found in the appendices.



## SPOTLIGHT Student Safety Patrols in Action!

In an early morning in February 2019, student safety patrols at Turner Elementary School took to the streets with brightly colored flags urging drivers to slow down. The demonstration was part of Parklands Safety Awareness Day, an event organized by Ward 8 ANC Commissioner Monique Diop (8D04) to raise awareness about on-going traffic safety concerns in the Parklands neighborhood. Commissioner Diop teamed up with Turner Elementary School to lead the effort. She gathered community partners and local advocates to assist Turner's safety patrol in creating brightly colored flags and calming traffic during morning arrival. In a true display of community, Parklands Safety Awareness Day brought together diverse set of partners to support the students' safety efforts including MPD, DDOT, Spin, Project Create, Safe Kids DC, the Safe Routes Partnership, WABA, and a number of Ward 8 residents.



# OUR VISION ZERO COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

The Safe Routes Partnership believes in community-driven change. Our approach to Vision Zero engagement values relationship building, active listening, and celebrating all successes. Serving as constant reminders, these values ensured that each phase of our project centered on the community and the places where residents live, learn, and play. The phases tended to overlap and evolve as our community connections deepened.

## PHASE ONE: Getting to Know You



Our Community Engagement Manager spent the first few months of this project learning about the people and places that make up East of the River. Guided by a spirit of genuine curiosity and desire to build authentic relationships, she spent nearly three months developing an understanding of the lay of the land: taking neighborhood walks, talking with residents, visiting local businesses and cultural institutions, doing historical research, and attending community events. Highlights included walking the Deanwood Heritage Trail, visiting the A Right to the City exhibition at Anacostia Community Museum, participating in Martha's Table's Joyful Food Markets, and spending afternoons in various public libraries. While this process was qualitative in nature, it was a crucial step in building authentic relationships with community members. It also reminded us that as guests in the community, we had to prioritize active listening and learning as key parts of our engagement strategy.

Formal school and community meetings were our opportunity to connect residents' experiences with official traffic safety data. We learned that many residents East of the River travel via bus and that Ward 8 has the lowest car ownership in the city. As we talked with school partners and community members, they noted how issues like speeding, poor lighting, poor signage, and unmarked crosswalks made them particularly vulnerable and people walking and riding bikes. School data revealed that half of DC students attend public charter schools. This meant we had to focus our engagement methods on safe multi-modal transportation for student commuters. Our Community Engagement Manager used this information to create our school partner prioritization map and to inform project activities.

## PHASE TWO: Listening to Community Voices

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We regularly incorporate storytelling and celebration into our community engagement efforts. Our Community Engagement Manager provided opportunities for residents to share transportation safety stories and ideas during outreach events. From creative surveys to colorful butcher paper graffiti walls, residents had a variety of options to express their thoughts on transportation safety. Students at Kelly Miller Middle School created contour line drawings of objects they observed in their neighborhood. As they completed their pieces, our Community Engagement Manager facilitated a conversation about safety around the area. Through art-making and creativity, students were able to identify their safety concerns and develop potential solutions.

## PHASE THREE: Building Our Team

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The strength of our work lies in collaboration and resource-sharing. Our Community Engagement Manager developed relationships with community partners to complement her work with schools. WABA and Safe Kids DC have been primary partners in implementing school events at KIPP Heights DC and

Garfield Elementary along with safety initiatives in other neighborhoods. At Aiton Elementary and Neval Thomas Elementary, we partnered with fellow Vision Zero grantees Discover Traffic Gardens and George Mason University to create educational events related to the schools' traffic garden projects. Kelly Miller Middle School gave us an opportunity to lead an after-school program and an in-school partnership with their enrichment teacher. Outside of school events, we connected with ANC Commissioners, transportation advocates, and local arts organizations to lead Vision Zero initiatives around Wards 7 and 8.

## PHASE FOUR: Ideas into Action

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Our "Vision Zero Heroes" series at Aiton Elementary and Neval Thomas Elementary developed from a brainstorm with project partner Discover Traffic Gardens. We wanted to find a way to build enthusiasm around the traffic garden installations and to share information about safety initiatives. We decided on the superhero theme due to its mass appeal and accessibility. We created hands-on arts activities related to transportation safety including a Vision Zero Hero photo booth and a reflective armband station. Most importantly, this initiative celebrated everyday heroes in the community and recognized our collective role in keeping each other safe.

## PHASE FIVE: Celebrate Successes

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Transportation change can take a long time. It is important to celebrate the small successes, even if the end goal has not yet been reached. At Garfield Elementary, families and staff had been advocating for safer infrastructure along Alabama Avenue. Their safety demonstrations during arrival and dismissal hours along with social media action led to a stand-up meeting with DDOT and the Ward 8 councilmember to discuss improving traffic safety. Garfield's advocacy efforts resulted in new community partnerships, opportunities to build positive relationships with MPD, and a flashing beacon light at the dangerous crosswalk. While Garfield's ultimate goal is a full traffic light at the crosswalk, the flashing beacon light marked a win for the school community. Our Community Engagement Manager organized a staff and parent appreciation event to celebrate their advocacy efforts and maintain momentum for future initiatives. Garfield ended the school year by winning DDOT's Trailblazer Award for their participation in Bike to School Day.

## PHASE SIX: Moving Forward

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A number of community-led safety initiatives are popping up East of the River. Residents are interested in starting walking school bus programs, bike clubs, and traffic safety working groups. Our Community Engagement Manager has been advising local leaders on project development and connecting them to additional resources around the city. The Safe Routes Partnership looks forward to supporting residents as their ideas grow into action and long-term sustainable change. We also encourage other transportation stakeholders from around the city to support local advocacy efforts in Wards 7 and 8, including small non-profits and small businesses.



# SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Safe Routes to School is a movement aimed at making sure students travel to and from school safely. It is also a fun way to students to incorporate physical activity into their daily routines. There are six basic kinds of activities that make up a well-rounded Safe Routes to School program. These principles are called the Six E's:



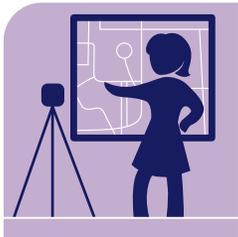
## EDUCATION

Providing students and the community with the skills to walk and bicycle safely, educating them about benefits of walking and bicycling, and teaching them about the broad range of transportation choices.



## ENCOURAGEMENT

Generating enthusiasm and increased walking and bicycling for students through events, activities, and programs.



## ENGINEERING

Creating physical improvements to streets and neighborhoods that make walking and bicycling safer, more comfortable, and more convenient.



## ENFORCEMENT

Deterring unsafe traffic behaviors and encouraging safe habits by people walking, bicycling and driving in school neighborhoods and along school routes.



## EVALUATION

Assessing which approaches are more or less successful, ensuring that programs and initiatives are supporting equitable outcomes, and identifying unintended consequences or opportunities to improve the effectiveness of each approach.



## EQUITY

Ensuring that Safe Routes to School initiatives are benefiting all demographic groups, with particular attention to ensuring safe, healthy, and fair outcomes for underserved students, students of color, students of all genders, students with disabilities, and others.

The Safe Routes Partnership website has a resource bank full of information about starting a Safe Routes to School program in your community. We also provide one-on-one support to schools and communities in need of customized assistance.

When thinking about starting a Safe Routes to School program, remember that no action is too small. Going on a walk around the neighborhood is a great way to familiarize yourself with how streets are functioning – or not functioning – for different users.

Including a safety tip during afternoon announcements can enforce positive behaviors as students travel home. Exploring social media accounts for local groups and organizations, transportation and non-transportation related, can connect you to potential safety champions in your area.

# GET CONNECTED: WHO'S WHO IN DC TRANSPORTATION

## DC Department of Transportation (DDOT)

is one of the agencies tasked with implementing Vision Zero. Here is a bit about what they do:

- DDOT planners and engineers work to ensure that streets are safe for everyone. This includes making road improvements, installing bike lanes, and adding infrastructure, like speed bumps and traffic lights, to slow down traffic.
- DDOT has a Safe Routes to School Coordinator who works to ensure students are traveling safely to and from school. They can help with safety improvement requests like putting a stop sign at a busy intersection or getting an additional crossing guard. The Safe Routes to School Coordinator also organizes Walk to School Day in October and Bike to School Day in May.
- DDOT has community engagement specialists for each ward who are available to listen to your community's concerns and update you on projects.
- In March, DDOT opened a Vision Zero Office that will work on specific initiatives aimed at eliminating traffic fatalities.
- DDOT runs the Capital Bikeshare program and encourages safe bicycling around the city.

## Mayor Bowser

Mayor Muriel Bowser committed to a Vision Zero goal of eliminating all traffic fatalities in the District by 2024. Her office works with several District agencies to implement the Vision Zero Action Plan.

## DC Public Schools

DC Public Schools (DCPS) is in charge of the bike education program. All second-grade students in DCPS schools participate in a bike education course as a part of P.E. class. At the end of the program, students go on a safety ride to practice their bike skills.

## Metropolitan Police Department (MPD)

Some communities partner with MPD to enforce traffic laws, especially speeding. MPD also has community engagement officers who attend meetings and events as a way to build positive relationships.

## Elected Officials

Ward council members and Advisory Neighborhood Commissioners (ANCs) provide information about transportation projects in their area. They are also available to hear community concerns and advocate for change.

## Community Organizations

### Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA)

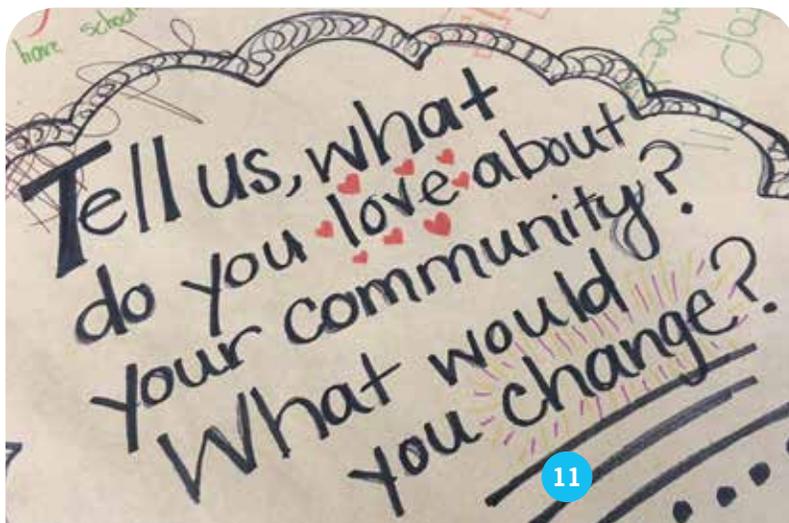
advocates for safer bicycling in the DC Metro area. They have community organizers who work on improving transportation safety specifically in DC. WABA also organizes bike rides around DC, Maryland, and Virginia.

**Safe Kids DC** is focused on childhood injury prevention. They organize Walk/Bike to School Day events, do bike helmet fittings, and lead car seat safety workshops.

**Gearin' Up Bicycles** works with young people from DC's underserved communities on developing career skills and encouraging biking as a transportation option. They have a bike shop in Eckington that sells high-quality used bikes. Gearin' Up also hosts a number of outreach events throughout the year including pop-up bike clinics where community members can get their bikes fixed for free.

**Discover Traffic Gardens** provides traffic garden design services along with hands-on traffic safety activities. Head to Aiton Elementary and Thomas Elementary to see Discover Traffic Gardens' first installations in DC Public Schools.

**Seasoned Settlers** provides educational entertainment services around DC, Maryland, and Virginia. Their public safety performances have been featured in Walk to School Day and Bike to School Day activities.



# HOW DOES TRANSPORTATION CHANGE WORK?

In a city like DC, our streets are changing all the time. Not only do we have cars, walking, buses, bikes, and metro, now we also have ridesharing and scooters as travel options. As we work toward Vision Zero, we might notice some traffic safety improvements that need to be made in our neighborhood. DDOT has an official process for requesting safety improvements through their Traffic Safety Assessment program and a new 311 app. DDOT's community engagement specialists can help you through this process if necessary. DDOT also has information on their website about [capital infrastructure projects](#) and page for [traffic safety studies](#).

## SPOTLIGHT Parent Power at Garfield Preparatory Academy

Transportation improvements can take a long time to plan and fund and there are very limited resources, so sometimes communities need to strongly advocate if they want their projects prioritized. Here is how one school in Ward 8 used their community's power to get a safer crosswalk in front of their school:

Garfield Preparatory Academy is located on Alabama Avenue near the Suitland Parkway exit. Garfield is home to a strong parent advocacy group and collaborates with number of community partners in various initiatives. Garfield families and staff recently participated in DDOT's 2017 Alabama Avenue Traffic Study that informed safety improvement plans along the entire corridor.

- **The Issue** – Garfield families and staff were concerned about a dangerous crosswalk in front of their school building. Speeding was a major issue along Alabama Avenue and cars were not slowing down for people in the crosswalk.
- **The Call to Action** – After three people were hit in the crosswalk during the first few weeks of school,

Garfield called a community meeting to share their concerns and develop solutions. They invited DDOT, their Ward 8 council member, MPD, and community partners. Parents also posted on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to gather support and show the seriousness of the issue.

- **The Meeting** – At the community meeting, parents and staff shared anecdotes about feeling unsafe in the crosswalk along Alabama Avenue. DDOT committed to installing a flashing beacon light at the crosswalk to slow down traffic. MPD committed to having a traffic enforcement officer on site for 30 days.
- **The Follow-Up** – The Safe Routes Partnership contacted Garfield to help facilitate action. Safe Routes Partnership also connected the school with WABA and Safe Kids DC to increase the level of support around this issue. These community partners followed up with DDOT about the flashing beacon light and shared updates with the Garfield community. The light was officially installed three months later.

- **The Celebration** – Garfield's community partners hosted an appreciation event to thank parents, caregivers, and staff for their transportation advocacy efforts. They also had DDOT and MPD come to the celebration to explain how street safety improvements are made and to hear lingering concerns from families.
- **The Future** – While getting a flashing beacon light installed was a success, Garfield and their community partners continue to push for safety improvements along Alabama Avenue. The community would ultimately like a full traffic light or stop sign at the school crosswalk. DDOT's community engagement specialist explained that making that kind of change is a longer process that involves further studies. Parents pushed back saying that their personal experiences of feeling unsafe should be considered more when deciding on infrastructure improvements. Garfield and DDOT are working together to find an appropriate solution.

# GET CREATIVE: ENGAGING YOUR COMMUNITY IN TRANSPORTATION SAFETY

Encouraging and advocating for safe transportation can be daunting – unless you make it fun! Check out some of creative ideas to try in your transportation safety initiatives:



## Spice Up Your Survey

DC residents have spoken – they are tired of surveys followed by inaction. Next time you seek community feedback, try out a butcher paper graffiti wall or a storytelling board. Stay tuned for our *Community Engagement Recipe Cards* that show you how to get community feedback while leaving paper surveys in the past.

## Walk Audits

A walk audit is a way to assess what street safety improvements are needed in your area. They are often done with community members (including kids!) and transportation officials. If you want to lead a walk audit in your neighborhood, we have some great [resources](#) to help you get started.

## Walk/Bike to School Day

Communities celebrate Walk to School Day in October and Bike to School Day in May. These are fun events that encourage students and families to skip the bus or car for the day and fire up their feet – or pedals. Safe Kids DC and DDOT’s Safe Routes to School Coordinator organize Walk to School Day and Bike to School Day events around the city. Our [Walk to School Day fact sheet](#) will get you all ready for a successful event.

## Walking School Bus/Bike Train

A walking school bus is a fun, safe way for students to travel to school with adult supervision. The “bus” travels along a planned route making routine stops along the way. Each bus is usually guided by one or two adults who make sure that students are safe and accounted for. During afternoon travel, the “bus” reverses directions and travels along the same route to drop off students. Check out our [step-by-step toolkit](#) for starting a walking school bus in your community.

## Pop-up Demonstrations

Wonder how much safer the streets around your school would be with a textured crosswalk or protected bike lanes? Try a pop-up demonstration and create temporary traffic safety installations. You will probably need some help with this one since it could involve closing streets and changing traffic patterns. Reach out to your ANC, DDOT, MPD, and local transportation organizations to get your first [pop-up demonstration](#) going. Here are a few more [helpful tips](#).

# GET INSPIRED: STORIES FROM DC SCHOOLS

## SPOTLIGHT

### Youth Make Their Mark at Kelly Miller Middle School

Kelly Miller Middle School is located in the Lincoln Heights neighborhood of Ward 7. When a classroom discussion revealed that many students felt unsafe walking in the dark due to poor lighting, they developed a fashion-forward safety solution. The Safe Routes Partnership collaborated with Kelly Miller students to create reflective clothing and accessories during in-school and afterschool programs. Students created and promoted their own designs to sell in the school store as a way to educate their peers on Vision Zero and raise awareness about poor lighting in their neighborhood. Apparel tags provided more information about Vision Zero in DC.



## SPOTLIGHT

### First Traffic Gardens Come to DC Public Schools

Aiton Elementary School and Neval Thomas Elementary School are home to the District's first traffic gardens. A traffic garden is a space that is set up to look like a mini street.

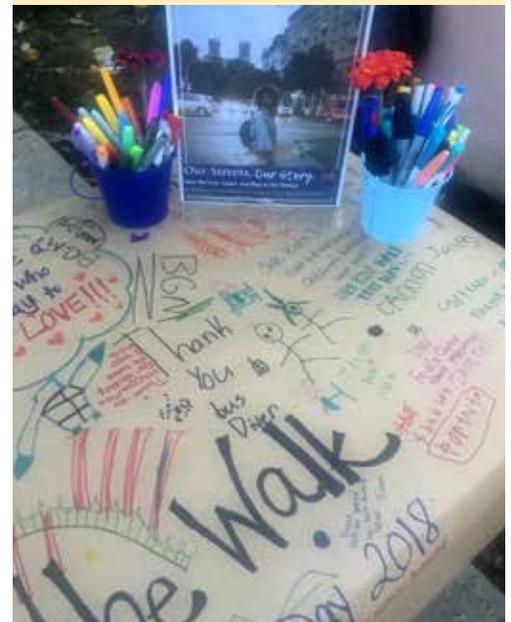


Traffic gardens help children learn the rules of the road and provide a place to build walking and biking safety skills. Aiton and Neval Thomas received traffic gardens through DDOT's Vision Zero grant program. Project leaders Fionnuala Quinn (Discover Traffic Gardens) and George Mason University consulted with students on the traffic garden design and added many of those ideas into the final product. The Safe Routes Partnership partnered with the team to host workshops where parents and caregivers created materials for the pre-K bike education curriculum, expanding their investment in the efforts and their knowledge about the safety skills education. This project also supports DCPS's second grade bike education program.

## SPOTLIGHT

### KIPP DC Walks the Rock

KIPP Heights DC teamed with Safe Kids DC and Safe Routes Partnership for Walk to School Day in October. Students were greeted by adults cheering them on and even Clifford the Big Red Dog made an appearance! The Safe Routes Partnership celebrated local safety champions by creating a group graffiti wall. Walk to School Day participants shared thank-you messages about the people who keep them safe – crossing guards, bus drivers, parents, neighbors, and more.



# TRAFFIC SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS

We worked with our project partners, including students, families, school staff, and local advocates, to create a set of Vision Zero recommendations and a set of community building recommendations. If Vision Zero is to be achieved, we must invest not only in infrastructure, but in our relationships with one another.

## Vision Zero

- Improve connectivity between bike trails East of the River.
- Implement traffic calming interventions in locations near schools, such as along Alabama Avenue and South Capitol Street.
- Increase funding for school traffic garden projects.
- Increase funding for bike education curriculum across more grade levels.
- Create Vision Zero promotional materials that are accessible and relevant to people from all backgrounds. Tips: use universal themes (superheroes, community heroes), prioritize strong visuals over heavy text, and use non-traditional mediums (felt boards, storybooks, songs). Collaborate with community members in the design and implementation process.
- Engage local arts partners in transportation safety events. Explore more creative placemaking opportunities East of the River.
- Fund grants and safety projects run by Wards 7 and 8 residents

## Community Engagement

- Go on neighborhood walks with residents. This gives residents a chance to share their stories and teach you about the people and places that are important to them.
- Learn about the history of different neighborhoods in DC. Along with visiting museums and exploring local heritage trails, find opportunities to talk with older adults about how the city has changed. The [DC Oral History Collaborative](#) has a number of resources on collecting oral histories and accessing the digital archive.
- Collaborate with residents and partners to host a community meal.

- Attend events outside of your professional focus area. If you work in transportation, try attending an arts convening or partner with housing advocates on a joint project. Our work is intersectional and the more we collaborate, the more we can do for our communities.
- Differentiate your communication styles. Find out how people in your community like to give and receive information. In-person communication and paper flyers are still effective tools especially with older adults and in communities of color.
- For more community engagement ideas, check out a recording of our [Engaging Diverse Communities webinar](#) and our new [community engagement resource](#).



# WHAT'S NEXT FOR EAST OF THE RIVER?



## Upcoming Infrastructure Projects in Ward 7

DDOT is completing a revitalization project along Minnesota Avenue. The purpose of the project is to increase pedestrian safety and improve connections between the Minnesota Avenue Metro stop and local bus lines. Improvements include widening sidewalks, upgrading lighting, and updating ADA wheelchair ramps. For a full project overview, visit the [Minnesota Avenue project page](#) on DDOT's website.

## Upcoming Infrastructure Projects in Ward 8

DDOT is ramping up infrastructure projects around Ward 8 in support of Vision Zero. Current plans include reconstructing Southern Avenue to improve pedestrian safety, placing traffic calming measures along Alabama Avenue, increasing trail connectivity, and installing more Capital Bikeshare docks. The Ward 8 Traffic Team holds monthly meetings at the William Lockridge/Bellevue Library to discuss upcoming infrastructure projects and share community concerns. The meetings are open to the public and a DDOT representative is usually in attendance.

## Safe Routes for Youth

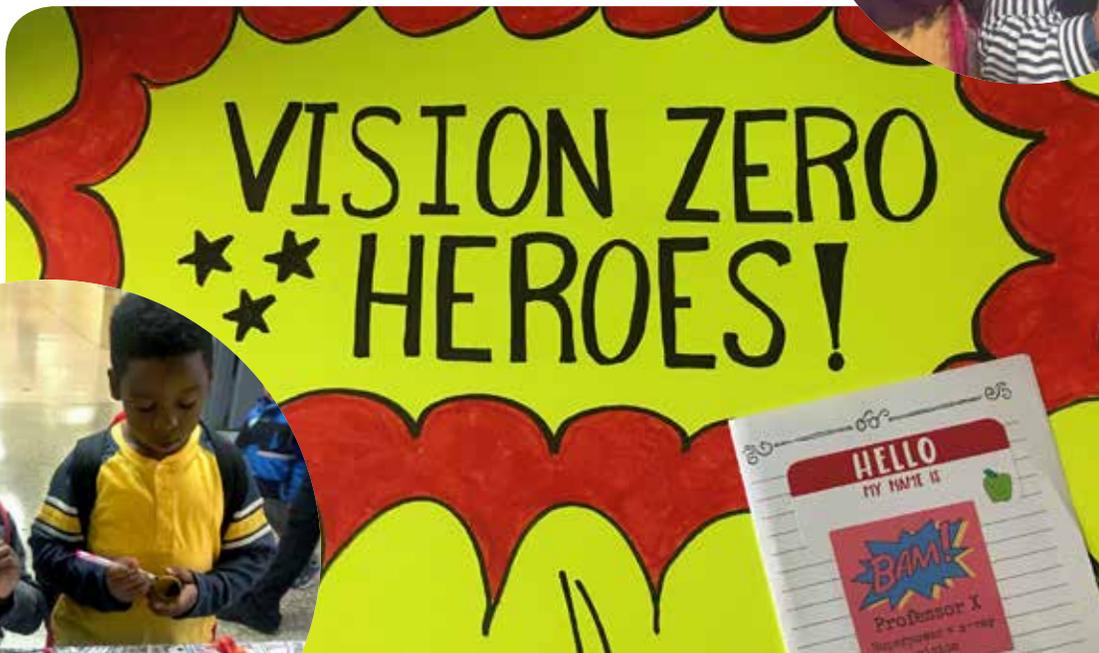
The Safe Routes Partnership teams up with young people for a new initiative called Safe Routes for Youth. This project celebrates youth in Wards 7 and 8 as community leaders and recognizes their unique position as transportation advocates. Young people, especially high school students, are commuting all around the city. They can offer fresh transportation safety solutions, serve as role models for younger kids, and can inspire their peers to engage in Vision Zero.

In Spring 2019, we partnered with students at Kelly Miller Middle School to create a line of reflective and glow-in-the-dark apparel and accessories. Students used fashion as a way to teach their school community about Vision Zero, creating custom clothing and accessories with messages about safe driving and walking. This work continues with Kelly Miller students along with other young leaders East of the River to develop new Vision Zero initiatives.

# REFLECTIONS

This project showed that an equitable Vision Zero plan calls on us to build our relationships as we build our streets. We made new friends, shared stories, celebrated successes, and championed change. As the District moves towards Vision Zero, it is important to remember that people are at the heart of it. Safety initiatives that value people's lived experiences and give them the power to implement solutions are the ones that will see the District reach zero traffic fatalities by 2024.

Transportation leaders East of the River are already hard at work designing safety initiatives centered on their community's needs. Youth are developing transportation solutions driven by innovation and creativity. An advocacy coalition is growing between residents, community partners, and District agencies. East of the River is ready for Vision Zero and looking towards a healthier, safer future.





# Safe Routes

**PARTNERSHIP**

*Active Paths for Equity & Health*

[www.saferoutespartnership.org](http://www.saferoutespartnership.org)