



June 19, 2020

Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms
55 Trinity Ave SW #2500
Atlanta, GA 30303

Dear Mayor Bottoms,

Re: Remove Police Enforcement from Vision Zero

Thank you for supporting Vision Zero during the 2017 campaign and for adopting it as the City's official goal for safe mobility in April 2020. For years, our organizations have called for the City of Atlanta to adopt and implement Vision Zero policies to eliminate traffic fatalities. In most cities in the United States, Vision Zero programs adopted the traffic engineering concept of the "Es": Education, Encouragement, Engineering, Enforcement, Evaluation, later adding Equity. But saying equity is not enough. During the [2017 campaign for Vision Zero](#) we noted "While some U.S. cities include enforcement of traffic laws using traffic stops in their Vision Zero strategies, we do not support that strategy for Atlanta. ...there has been growing interest in limiting law enforcement actions in Vision Zero."

The racial disparity in police violence is staggering. Black people in the U.S. are dramatically more likely than whites to be killed by law enforcement. On Friday, June 12th, unjust enforcement by two Atlanta police officers cost Rayshard Brooks his life. Police are sworn to serve and protect, not take the life of a father asleep in his car in a fast-food drive-through. While Atlanta underwent police reform following the Atlanta Police Department shooting of 92-year-old Kathryn Johnson in 2007, recent events are another reminder that the reforms did not work. Traffic stops make our streets less safe for Black, Brown, Immigrant, and Indigenous communities.

We call on the City of Atlanta's Department of Transportation Vision Zero program to remove police enforcement as a traffic safety tool.

By eliminating police enforcement from the efforts to achieve zero traffic deaths, Atlanta will reduce potentially fatal or dangerous interactions with the police. We join national organizations including the [Safe Route Partnership](#) and a growing number of city groups in [Minneapolis](#), [New York](#), [Boston](#), and [Philadelphia](#) in advocating for this reform.

Black and Brown advocates have [pushed for this change for years](#). Fear of being targeted by the police creates barriers to walking or biking, as an Atlanta Bicycle Coalition board member noted in a 2017 [blog about his experiences biking while Black](#).

Atlanta must move beyond enforcement to prevention when it comes to the comprehensive safety of people on our streets. Instead of police enforcement, we call on the City of Atlanta to fulfill its commitment to **rebuild streets for safety**.

Our groups have been trying to bring changes for safer streets, especially to the High Injury Network concentrated in Southwest Atlanta, for over two decades. Start with neighborhoods where most residents are Black and which have been ignored in decision-making, seen their communities dissected and homes destroyed by highway construction, and still lack access to high-quality public transportation. These communities are both incredibly resilient and incredibly stressed. They are also disproportionately affected by traffic violence. **Listen to these communities to determine whether and how to maintain a system of automated speed cameras** as a tool to reduce high-speed crashes through evaluation and education. Use engineering and policy to make streets safer for everyone.

In addition, we add our voice to the chorus of organizations and individuals calling on the City of Atlanta to

- **create full and transparent accountability** of the Atlanta Police Department to communities;
- **redirect a portion of the APD budget to much-needed social justice services** such as Public Defenders, services for those unjustly incarcerated, and to fully fund and empower the Atlanta Citizen Review Board, among other pressing community needs; and to
- commit to the ongoing fight to root out racism and white supremacy from all our systems and institutions.

These measures will create a more equitable city, rather than a more violently-policed one. Thank you for your attention to these matters. We welcome your response and action.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Serna
Executive Director, Atlanta Bicycle Coalition

Cathy Tyler
President & CEO, PEDS

Deborah Scott
Executive Director, Georgia STAND-UP

Odetta MacLeish-White
Managing Director, TransFormation Alliance