

Goals, Planning, and Action Leadership Committee

Leadership Commitment and Goal Setting

A review of auto accidents data (2016-2020) clearly shows George County's fatality rate is higher than the State of Mississippi and the National average, per capita. This research and data reinforces the County's commitment to take proactive steps to eliminate all traffic fatalities and severe injuries, while increasing safe travel for all through the County's **VISION ZERO ACTION PLAN**.



At the core of George County's Vision Zero is a commitment to protect human life and an acknowledgement that all transportation-related deaths are preventable and unacceptable. This means road system designers and policymakers are expected to improve the roadway conditions, strategies, and related systems to lessen the severity of crashes for all users.

Vision Zero Action Plan recognizes drivers and motorists will sometimes make mistakes, so the road system and related policies should be designed to ensure those inevitable mistakes do not result in severe injuries or fatalities.

Vision Zero acknowledges that many factors contribute to safe mobility including roadway design, speeds, driver's behaviors, technology, and policies and sets clear goals to achieve the shared goal of zero fatalities and severe injuries.

George County's Action Plans primary goal is to reduce the County's fatal auto accident rate to below the State's average in four (4) years, and further, to the eventual goal to reduce all fatal auto accidents and serious injuries to zero. The George County Board of Supervisors approved a Letter of Committed by the Board President at the September 06, 2022 meeting to achieve these significant declines.

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Planning Structure

The George County Board of Supervisors has been activity and formally involved with strategic road safety planning since 2018. Each Fiscal Year the Board reviews and approves a significant road project to improve driver and traffic safety using a combination of state/federal funds and matching County funds. The following projects were all approved as County road safety projects, by the Board:

- 1) MS Hwy. 198 East- Widening & Turn Lane Expansion Project in 2019
- 2) Venture Road Widening & Drainage Project (Joint County/City Project) in 2020
- 3) Scott Road & Hwy. 26 Intersection Project (Joint County/City project) in 2021
- 4) Evanston Road Widening and Turn Lane Expansion Project in 2022
- 5) Beesley Bridge Replacement Project in 2023
- 6) Merrill Bridge Replacement Project in 2023-2024

With the approval of the 2021 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, and the vast expansion of federal road safety programs, it became clear George County needed to formalize its internal road safety process to reflect federal roadway system planning.

George County began discussion and developing a formal Action Plan in March 2022. Supervisors, the County Engineer, and the Community Development Office started a list of several key road and bridge improvement project. In May 2022, the Board formally selected two roads projects for research and review for possible BIL funding. In July, the Board formally accepted a ranked critical bridge list from the County Engineer for possible BIL funding.

After weeks of meetings and workshops, an initial Committee was officially formed on August 15, 2022, to oversee the Action Plan development, implementation, and monitoring. The committee currently consists of five members, as follows: Board President Frankie Massey, Sheriff Keith Havard, Community Development Director Ken Flanagan, Civil Engineer Michael Brown and County Engineer Bob Diamond.

The preliminary Action Plan was presented to the George County Board of Supervisors at the Sept. 06, 2022 public meeting. The Committee publicly reviewed vital local road accident and fatal vehicle reports from the previous five years. With the Board's approval, the preliminary Action Plan was posted on County's website (new page) and added to the Board's Bi-Monthly Meeting Agenda for discussion and updates.