MONTGOMERY COUNTY - MARYLAND
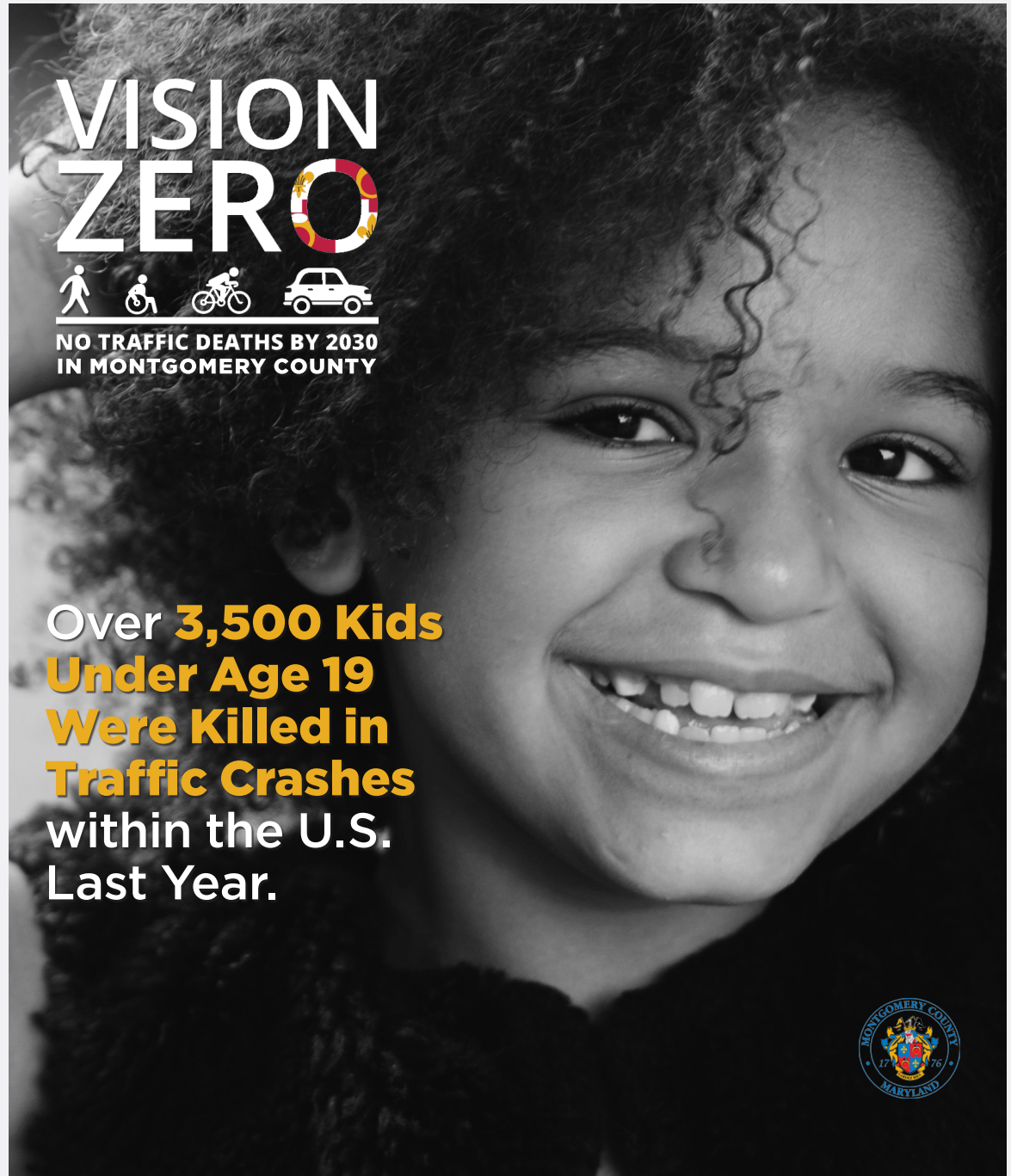
DECEMBER 2019

EQUITY FRAMEWORK

VISION ZERO

NO TRAFFIC DEATHS BY 2030
IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Over **3,500 Kids Under Age 19 Were Killed in Traffic Crashes** within the U.S. Last Year.

MCDOT

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to the residents and County Staff that were members of the Vision Zero Equity Task Force and spent March through July 2019 building the equity framework.

Background

In Montgomery County, severe and fatal traffic crashes are not distributed evenly across our neighborhoods. Communities with higher rates of poverty, persons of color, and younger residents have higher collision rates compared to the rest of the County. Hispanic and Non-Hispanic Black/African American residents have a 33% higher traffic fatality rate compared to Non-Hispanic White residents. Because of these outcome disparities, Montgomery County Government and the Pedestrian, Bicycle, Traffic Safety Advisory Committee (PBTSAC) created the Vision Zero Equity Task Force to better understand these disparities and make recommendations on improving safety for all residents.

The Vision Zero Equity Task Force consisted of 27 members of the public and County Staff and met five times between March and July 2019 to build the Vision Zero Equity Framework. Meeting locations rotated around the county, were open to members of the public, and were livestreamed to assist members that could not be at each meeting in person. The first meeting provided an overview of Vision Zero, Montgomery County demographics, and the current disparity outcomes in traffic safety by geography, income, race/ethnicity, and age. The second, third, and fourth meetings were reviews of the County's current engineering, education, and enforcement activities. The fifth meeting was a workshop for members to provide input on the first draft of the equity framework.

The work of the Vision Zero Equity Task Force is intended to advance multiple goals of County Government. The recommendations will be used to change current policies and practices to ensure more equitable outcomes, lay out an equity framework for building the County's long-term Vision Zero Strategy and the ten year plan, provide actions that will be incorporated into the County Government's Racial Equity and Social Justice Action Plan, and incorporated into traffic and transit master plans such as the upcoming Pedestrian Master Plan.

Current Traffic Safety Outcomes

The Vision Zero Equity Task Force was recommended in the Vision Zero Two-Year Action Plan due to the disparate outcomes across the county for serious injuries and deaths in traffic crashes. Below are some of the data used by the Task Force to understand the outcomes and what will be tracked to determine if the gaps are being closed. For all data reviewed by the Task Force, visit https://montgomerycountymd.gov/visionzero/equity.html

High Concentration of Serious and Fatal Collisions

Throughout the County, State, and US, communities with higher rates of poverty and persons of color are disproportionately affected by traffic violence. When examining crash density against community characteristics (since ethnicity and race are not captured in the crash data), communities with higher poverty and higher concentrations of Hispanic or Latino residents have higher crash densities. The map below identifies neighborhoods with higher densities of serious and fatal crashes. The darker the blue, the higher the density. Neighborhoods with a red border are Equity Emphasis Areas that have significant concentrations of low-income, minority populations, or both.

Legend

Collisions per Square Mile

- ≤5
- 5 - 12
- 12 - 23
- 23 - 42
- 42+
- Equity Emphasis Area
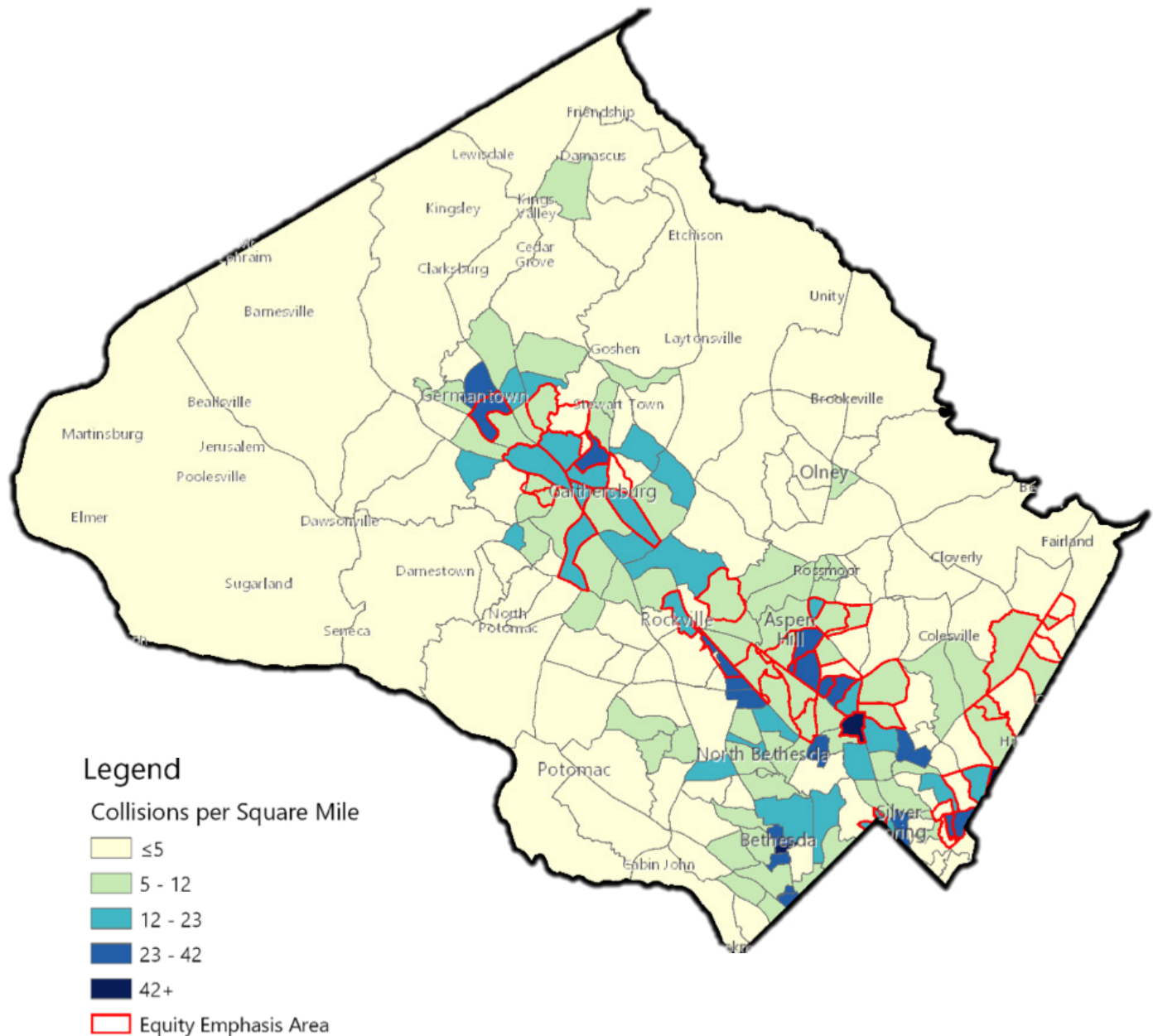
Traffic Fatality Rates by Ethnicity and Race

Currently police reports do not capture the ethnicity or race of persons involved in traffic crashes, but race and ethnicity information are available from mortality records from the medical examiner. Data from 2011-2015 obtained from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reveal that Hispanic and Non-Hispanic Black/African American county residents have a 33% higher traffic fatality rate compared to Non- Hispanic White residents.

Traffic Fatality Rates by Gender of Person Killed or Severely Injured

Matching national trends, males involved in severe or fatal crashes are overrepresented when compared to the overall population. Males were more likely to engage in dangerous behaviors (intoxicated, not wearing seatbelt, speeding) compared to females.
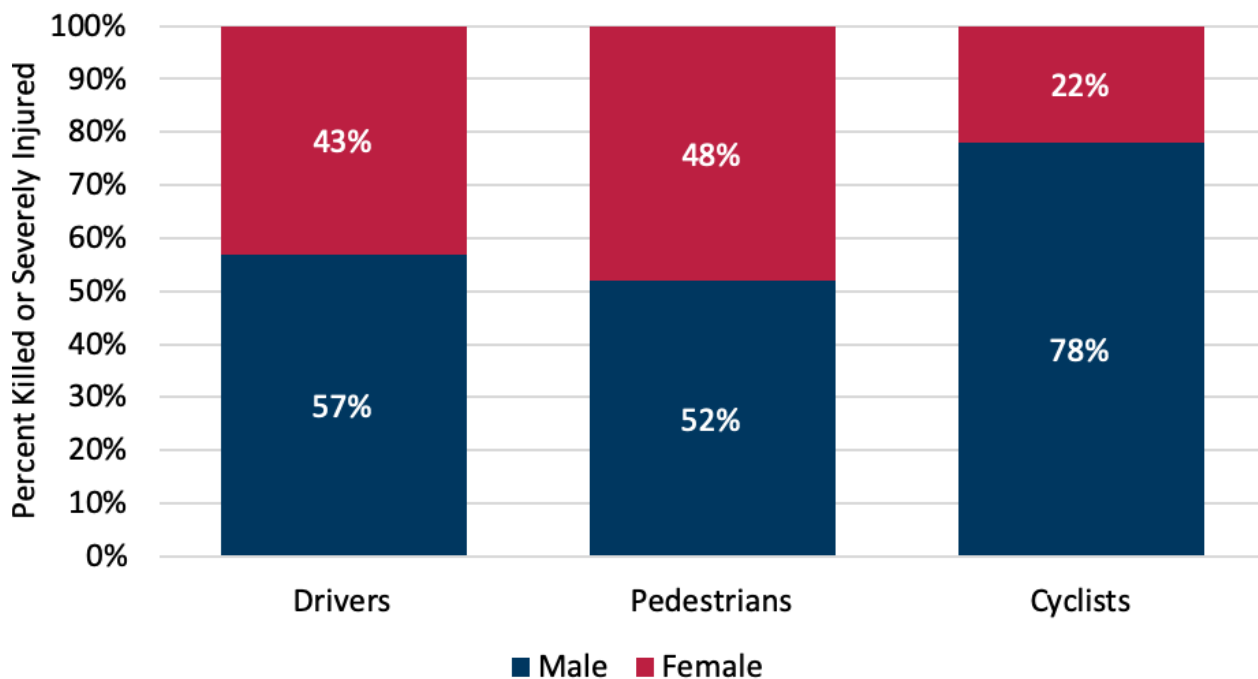
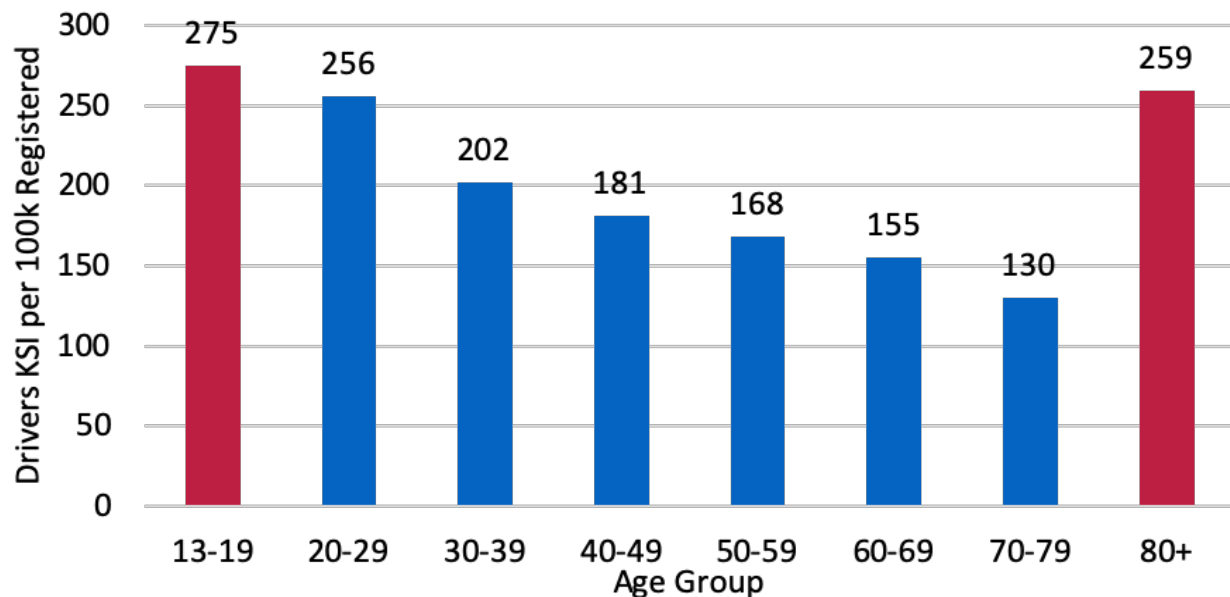# Age of Person Killed or Severely Injured

For drivers, the highest rates were for the very youngest and oldest drivers. (The chart says "13-19" as it includes riders on dirt bikes and ATVs). The 80+ population in Montgomery County is excepted to grow by 116% by 2040 compared to only 6% for 15-29-year-old residents. For pedestrians, the highest rate was for the 20-29 age group with the 60+ age groups not far behind. The 20-29 age group is a challenge as this group is out of school and less likely to be interacting with other County services or programs where education would be done. For cyclists, the highest rate was for the 10-19 age group. Within this 10-19 group, 78% were high school age.

Age of Drivers Killed or Severely Injured
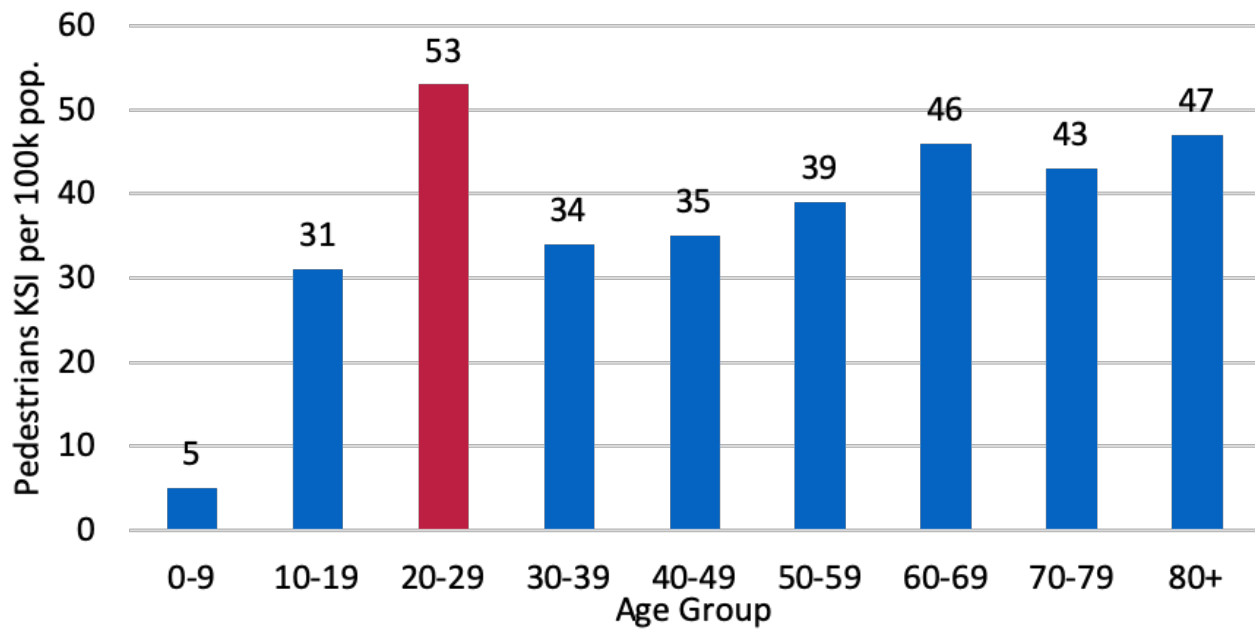
Age of Pedestrians Killed or Severely Injured
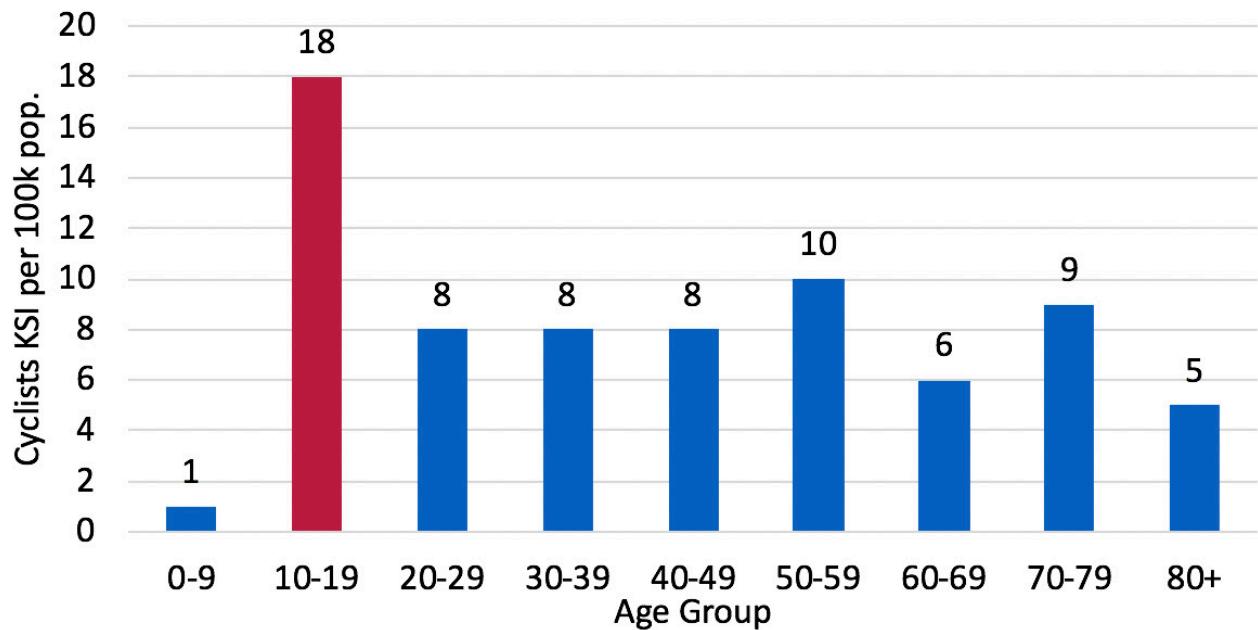
Age of Cyclists Killed or Severely Injured

Vision Zero Equity Statement

To implement the ten-year Vision Zero Action Plan, Montgomery County will prioritize and allocate funding and resources to the communities that experience a disproportionate burden of traffic-related fatalities and serious injuries. This framework will ensure equitable outcomes for community centered projects as Montgomery County develops its Capital Improvement Program.

Guiding Principles for the ten-year Vision Zero action plan:

- **Community Engagement:** Montgomery County will consider everyone's voices and concerns, which includes being proactive to engage communities that may not be currently represented in the process or make requests for safety projects.
- **Access:** Residents all over Montgomery County can safely access multiple transportation options to reach their destination.
- **High Injury Network:** Using a data-informed approach, Montgomery County will prioritize funding to the high injury network, with special attention to equity emphasis areas as defined by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments and shown in the Vision Zero Two-Year Action Plan.
- **Address Historical Disinvestment:** Montgomery County will invest in areas that are historically underserved by transportation funding and projects that improve safety for people walking, biking, and using mobility assistive equipment (wheelchair, canes, etc.).

Equity Framework Considerations

The Vision Zero Equity Task Force divided its framework recommendations by the traditional 3E's of traffic safety – Engineering, Education, and Enforcement. While there are three sections, the Task Force emphasized that engineering improvements are paramount to lowering injury rates and increasing equitable outcomes. Engineering should be supported by education and, when necessary, utilize police and automated enforcement against the most dangerous behaviors. These considerations will be used in development of the next update of the ten-year action plan and to prioritize capital improvement projects.

Engineering

Currently, resources for traffic safety are utilized for requests that come from the public, County Executive, or County Council. This can improve safety gradually but does not direct resources to known high crash areas if requests are not being generated from those areas. Groups traditionally underrepresented (people of color, people who speak limited English, and people with below average incomes) are less likely to make requests for funding or raise awareness of safety issues due to barriers of engaging with government (time, language skills, and not knowing how to communicate needs to the government). The Vision Zero Equity Task Force recommends MCDOT implement a scorecard using the criteria below to develop a more proactive safety program and utilize its resources to improving the built environment in high crash locations.

DATA

- While consideration should be given to safety projects that are recommended by community members, funding, resources, and types of projects should be ranked for implementation based on need as evidenced by data such as the high injury network. This data should be coupled with equity emphasis areas that account for communities with higher rates of poverty, youth, and people of color.

EXISTENCE OF PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

- Determine if the community has adequate sidewalks, bike infrastructure, bus stops, lighting, and other physical infrastructure that would increase safety.

MODAL PRIORITY & CRASHES

- Prioritize vulnerable transportation modes (walking, bicycling, scooting, and persons using mobility assistive equipment) over driving
- Allocate resources to modes with the highest percentage of fatalities and then to the mode with the next highest percentage of injuries to meet the goal of zero traffic related deaths and injuries

LOCATION

- Prioritize projects based on location such as: neighborhood in an equity emphasis area based on the census tract; within the walkshed of a school; area within a quarter mile of a senior or recreation center; neighborhood (census tract) has a high vulnerability senior population as identified by the Senior Vulnerability Study

HISTORY OF FUNDING

- Review prior engineering and maintenance projects in the community noting the type and date of project

Education and Enforcement

The engineering section of this Vision Zero Equity Framework outlines specific actions to use in developing the ten-year update of the Vision Zero Action Plan as well as the county's list of capital improvement projects. Education and Enforcement are also critical pieces to the equity framework that should be entrenched practices in the implementation of Vision Zero. In this equity framework, guidelines and tactical opportunities are identified for the education and enforcement safety principles. The guidelines represent practices that should become established norms in implementation of the Vision Zero program. The tactical opportunities indicate actions that would strengthen the Vision Zero program.

Education

In reviewing the Montgomery County, DC Region, and State of Maryland education and outreach programs, the Vision Zero Equity Task Force recommends utilizing more targeted campaigns for vulnerable roadway users (youth, seniors, racial and ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, people with low incomes, people who speak limited English, and shift workers) in order to better focus resources and elevate voices that are not always heard. Given the numerous languages spoken in the county, outreach must be performed in multiple languages and methods.

PRIORITIZE ALL VULNERABLE GROUPS

(Youth, Seniors, Minorities, Low Income, Limited English, Persons with Disabilities, and Shift Workers)

Guidelines

- Use culturally competent messaging to reach diverse groups of audiences that is targeted to the needs of the community.
- Use messaging that is universal, such as non-verbal translation for messages using icons or pictures, for campaigns that have wider audiences and funding and time do not permit for creating targeted messages.
- Prioritize the County and State's community outreach efforts in and around schools.

Tactical Opportunities

- Conduct educational campaigns targeted at vulnerable populations in equity emphasis areas with priority near high crash locations.
- Ensure that County employees working in the community participate in cultural competency or racial bias training.
- Implement bike safety as a part of the curriculum in schools.

- In community education classes, emphasize bicycle and pedestrian education along with driver's education.

DATA

Tactical Opportunities

- Examine barriers that deter or minimize the likelihood that vulnerable populations would contact the County to report problem areas or make recommendations for projects.
- Measure the impact of educational campaigns on behavior.
- Determine the obstacles that exist for children walking to school and how the Safe Routes to School program can eliminate those obstacles.
- Develop a metric that allows for improved identification of vulnerable populations and what their education/outreach needs and complete an outreach plan for this population based on the data.

COMMUNITY PRESENCE

Guidelines

- Use local influencers to spread awareness messages. Influencers may be schools, churches, community organizations, and formal/informal leaders.

Tactical Opportunities

- Educate residents on methods to actively engage with County offices and departments such as making a service request through MC311.
- Conduct educational campaigns in areas where traffic safety problems are persistent.
- Provide support to community groups to sponsor advocacy programs.

Enforcement

Officer initiated and automated enforcement to curb dangerous roadway user behaviors have the potential to negatively affect equity goals and trust in law enforcement. While the Vision Zero Equity Task Force did find enforcement to still be necessary as part of the Vision Zero strategy, it should be used judiciously and always used in conjunction with engineering and education. The Task Force recommends the following actions to ensure more equitable enforcement of traffic safety laws.

DATA

Guidelines

- Incorporate the built environment when determining areas for high visibility enforcement. For example, police should avoid high visibility enforcement activities against pedestrians in areas where the distance between marked crossings is so far that the environment requires crossing mid-block or at an unmarked crosswalk. In this case, enforcement should be performed at clearly marked crosswalks.
- Ensure enforcement is used to curb dangerous behaviors and adopt a strategy such as San Francisco's **"Focus on the Five"** enforcement program that aims to issue half of traffic citations to the five most common causes of collisions and injuries.

Tactical Opportunities

- Collect the data on warnings versus citations given to improve consistency with decision making for issuing a warning versus a citation, including differences between

FINE AND PENALTY ALTERNATIVES

Guidelines

- Develop level of officer initiated and automated enforcement so that low-income groups won't be disproportionately impacted.

Tactical Opportunities

- Provide alternatives to paying fines such as community service or attending an educational class.

TRAINING

Tactical Opportunities

- Train officers on implicit racial and ethnic bias around traffic enforcement.

Measuring Progress

The Vision Equity Framework is meant to provide further guidance to Montgomery County's Vision Zero Plan and is a living document that should be used in development and implementation of capital improvement projects. Progress towards implementation of this equity framework will be measured at the County Executive and Department level. The Vision Zero Coordinator will be responsible for tracking progress and these indicators will be built into the Montgomery County Department of Transportation and Montgomery County Office of Planning prioritization lists.