

VISION ZERO



NO TRAFFIC DEATHS BY 2030

Montgomery County Vision Zero Equity Framework

Working Draft

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.

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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 should 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 provide actions that should be incorporated into the County Government's Racial Equity and Social Justice Action Plan.

Vision Zero Equity Statement

To achieve Vision Zero, Montgomery County will prioritize and allocate funding and resources to the communities that experience a disproportionate burden of traffic-related fatalities and serious injuries.

Guiding Principles:

- **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:** Investments 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.

Engineering

Currently, resources for traffic safety are utilized for requests that come from the public, County Executive, or County Council. This can improve safety in a piecemeal fashion but does not direct resources to known high crash areas if requests are not being generated from those areas. 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.

| ENGINEERING | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Data | 1. 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 | 2. Determine if the community has adequate sidewalks, bike infrastructure, bus stops, lighting, and other physical infrastructure that would increase safety. |

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| <p>Modal Priority & Crashes</p> | <p>3a. Prioritize vulnerable transportation modes (walking, bicycling, scooting, and persons using mobility assistive equipment) over driving</p> <p>3b. 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</p> |
| | <p>3. 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</p> |
| <p>History of Funding</p> | <p>4. Review prior engineering and maintenance projects in the community noting the type and date of project</p> |

Education

Education and outreach efforts for Vision Zero should focus on raising awareness for all vulnerable roadway users. Given the numerous languages spoken in the county, outreach must be performed in multiple languages and methods.

| <p>EDUCATION</p> | |
|--|---|
| <p>Prioritize all vulnerable groups (Youth, Seniors, Minorities, Persons with Disabilities, and Shift Workers)</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct educational campaigns targeted at vulnerable populations in equity emphasis areas. 2. Use culturally competent messaging to reach diverse groups of audiences. Cultural competency includes messaging that is universal, non-verbal translation, meeting where the target population lives, and focusing on different modes. Ensure that County employees working in the community participate in cultural competency or racial bias training. 3. Implement bike safety as a part of the curriculum in schools. 4. Prioritize street teams in and around schools. 5. In community education classes, emphasize bicycle and pedestrian education along with driver’s education. |

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| <p style="text-align: center;">Data</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Collect data to determine the likelihood that vulnerable populations would contact the County to report areas of concern or make recommendations for projects. 2. Measure the impact of educational campaigns on behavior. 3. Determine the obstacles that exist for children walking to school and how the Safe Routes to School program can eliminate those obstacles. 4. Create a metric to prioritize vulnerable populations. Develop an outreach plan for vulnerable populations based on this data. |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Community Presence</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. County will educate residents on methods to actively engage with the County offices. 11. Conduct educational campaigns in areas where traffic safety problems are persistent. 12. Use local influencers to spread awareness messages. Influencers may be schools, churches, community organizations, and formal/informal leaders. 13. County Government should 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.

| ENFORCEMENT | |
|--------------------|--|
| Data | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Incorporate the built environment when determining areas for high visibility enforcement. For example, police should avoid high visibility enforcement 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. 2. Compile information that reveals the mode that is being enforced most <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Engineering that would make people make bad choices b. Focus on behaviors that can hurt others c. At fault rate - by reviewing the ratio of people who are at fault walking and biking versus driving. Enforcement should be prioritized towards dangerous behavior that can hurt others such as driver speeding and distracted driving. 3. Collect the data on warnings versus citations given to improve consistency with decision making for issuing a warning versus a citation. 4. 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. |
| | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Provide alternatives to paying fines such as community service or attending an educational class. 6. Develop level of officer initiated and automated enforcement so that low-income groups won’t be disproportionately impacted. |
| Training | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Train officers on implicit bias around traffic enforcement. |

Measuring Progress

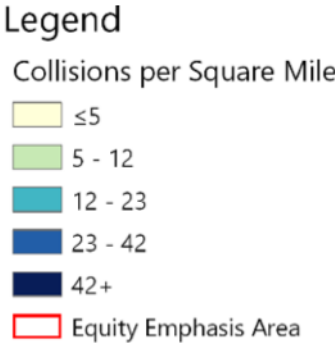
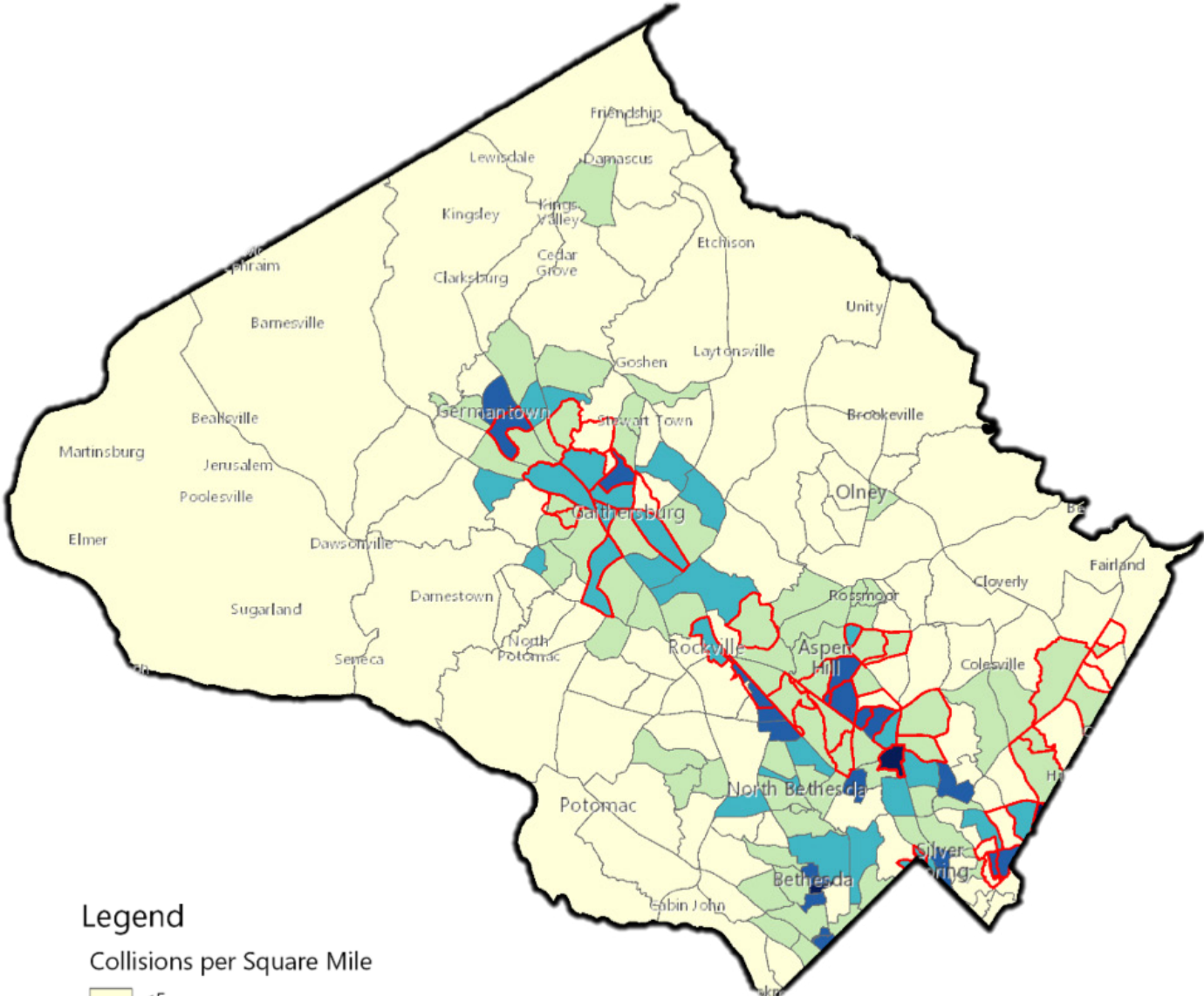
The Vision Equity Framework is meant to complement Montgomery County's Vision Zero Plan and is a living document. Progress towards implementation of this equity framework will be measured at the County Executive and Department level. The Vision Zero Coordinator will be responsible for tracking progress and these indicators will be built into the Montgomery County Department of Transportation and Montgomery County Office of Planning prioritization lists.

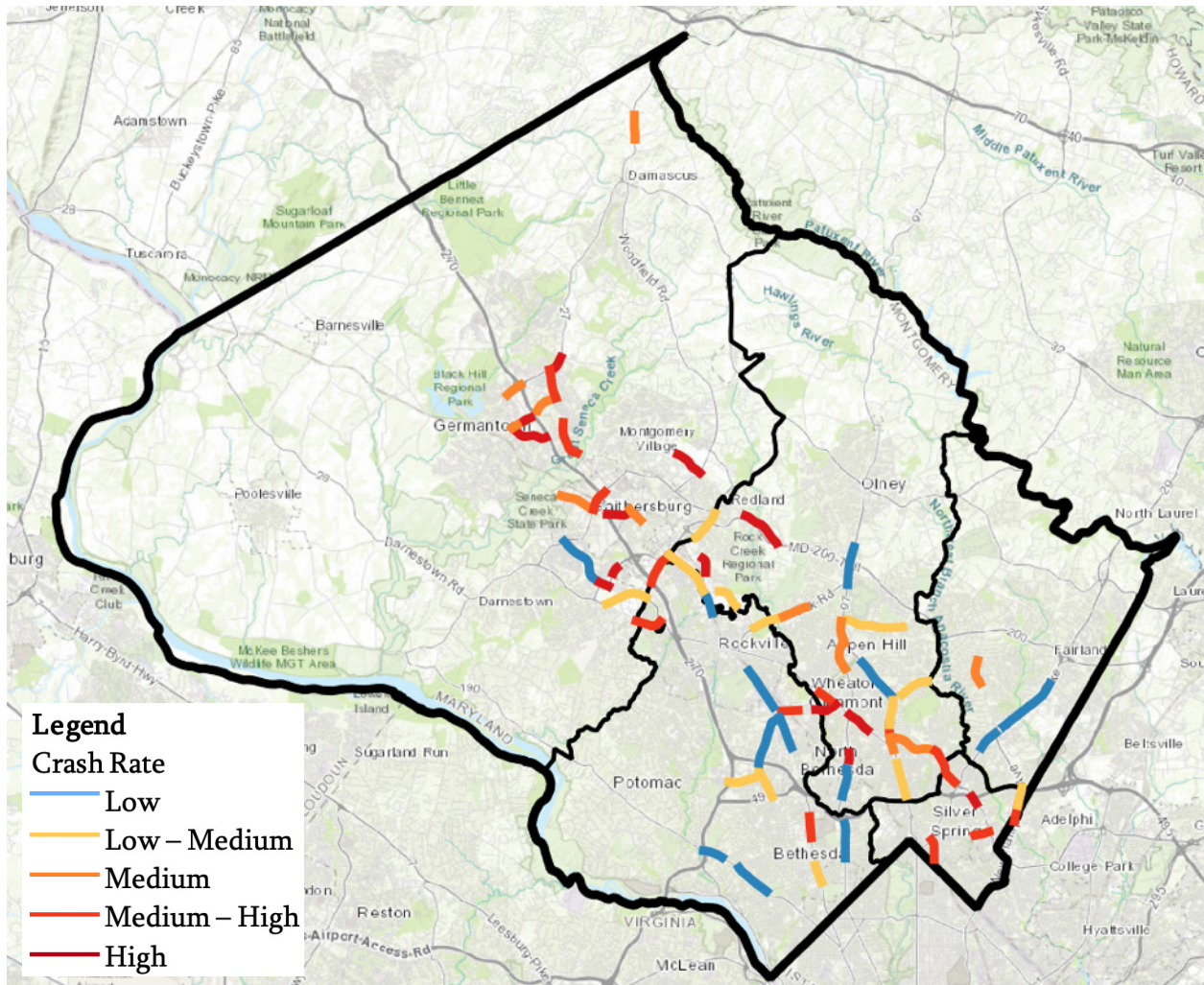
Current Traffic Safety Outcomes

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 maps below identify high crash neighborhoods and specific roadways with higher rates of serious and fatal crashes.

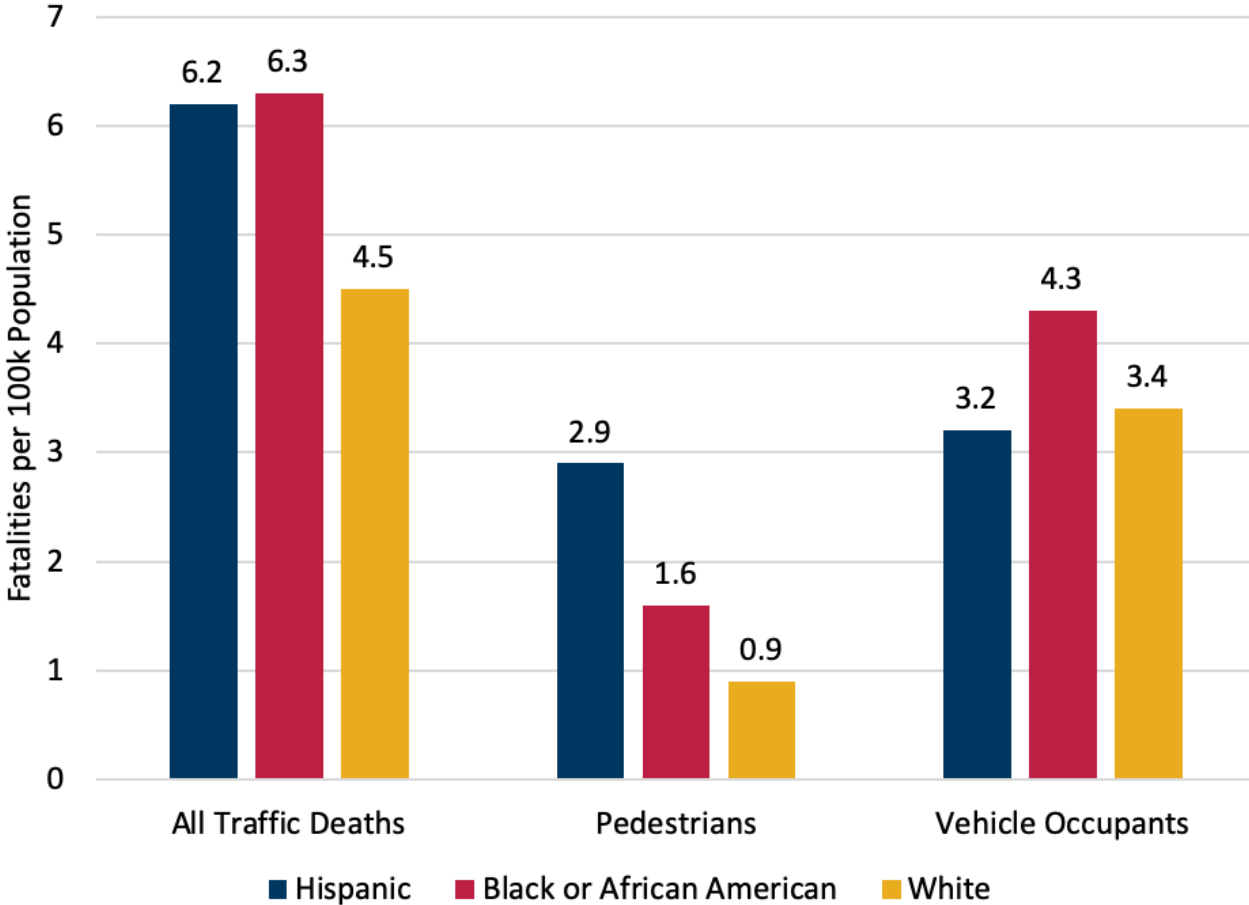




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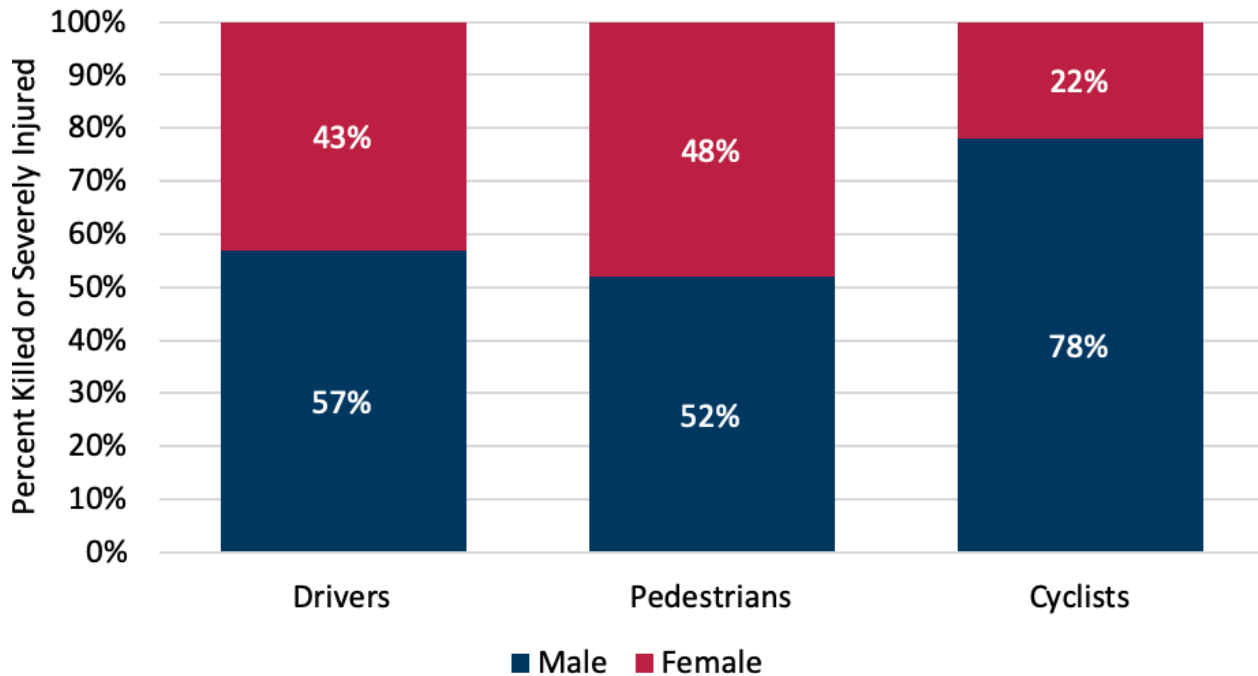
Traffic Fatality Rates by Ethnicity and Race

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 expected 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 80+ age group right 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.

