

VISION ZERO SUCCESS STORY — INFRASTRUCTURE

Speed Management Projects — West Palm Beach, Florida

Key Successes

Initial results from the Olive Avenue and Cumberland Drive projects yielded an 8-percent and 52-percent reduction respectively in the 85th-percentile speed.¹ In addition, West Palm Beach’s city-wide Vision Zero program yielded promising results. From 2018 to 2019, there has been:

18% -reduction in vehicle/pedestrian crashes.

35% -decrease in pedestrian/bike crashes.

55% -decrease in serious injury crashes.

33% -decrease in fatal crashes.



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Figure 1. Graphic. Aerial view of the highest-crash intersection along Okeechobee Boulevard, Okeechobee at South Tamarind Avenue/ Parker Avenue.

Background

In August 2018, West Palm Beach became the fourth jurisdiction in Florida to adopt the Vision Zero initiative. The City focused on speed management as part of its Vision Zero efforts. As part of this focus, the City identified three speed management projects, all centered around reducing speeds and creating a safer space for pedestrians and bicyclists. These projects were initially developed under the City’s bicycle master plan and prioritized under Vision Zero.

One of the three projects was along Okeechobee Boulevard (figure 1), where 33 percent of the crashes in the downtown area occurred. Forty-five percent of the crashes that occurred on Okeechobee Boulevard occurred during either the morning or afternoon peak hour. Fifty-two percent of the bicycle or pedestrian-involved crashes occurred at night.

The other two projects were located on South Olive Avenue (figure 2) and Cumberland Drive (figure 3).

Implementation

The Okeechobee Boulevard project included implementing context sensitive solutions to manage speed on a street segment in the downtown area of West Palm Beach.² The City built bike lanes in conjunction with planned redevelopment.

² Federal Highway Administration. (2020). “Context Sensitive Solutions and Design.” <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/css/>

¹ 85th-percentile speed is the speed at which 85 percent of free-flowing traffic is traveling at or below.





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Figure 2. Graphic. Constructed protected bike lane along Okeechobee Boulevard.

Figure 3. Graphic. New roundabout with protected bicycle track at intersection of Cumberland Dr. and Saratoga Rd.

The City, in the long term, may remove the westbound right-turn lane at South Tamarind Avenue/Parker Avenue and Okeechobee Boulevard, which is the intersection with the highest number of crashes along the corridor.

The South Olive Avenue project was approximately 2.1 miles. The design included curb ramps, crosswalks, upgraded school zones, bike lanes, and a reduced travel lane from 11 feet to 9.5 feet.

The Cumberland Drive project included a protected cycle track (as seen in figure 3), a roundabout with protected bicycle and pedestrian paths, additional lighting, and a reduced travel lane from 15 and 24 feet to 11 feet.

The City used its “Face of the City” community engagement process for all three projects. The City has an ordinance that requires it to conduct community outreach prior to receiving City Commission approval. In addition, the City conducted significant outreach for its bicycle master plan. City staff on numerous occasions

have presented on the City’s mobility strategy and the comprehensive approach to achieve complete streets and connectivity.

Outcomes

The measures implemented along South Olive Avenue resulted in an 8-percent reduction in the 85th-percentile speed of vehicles along the corridor. The new design along Cumberland Drive resulted in a reduction of 85th-percentile speed from 37 mph to 20 mph. The City continues to compile results on the improvements on Okeechobee Boulevard.

Funding

Funds for Vision Zero and associated projects came from the City and grants.

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