

SUBSTITUTE RESOLUTION NO. RS2024-905

A resolution urging the Metropolitan Nashville Police Department to ~~increase~~make recommendations and take actions to improve traffic enforcement and the Nashville Department of Transportation and Multimodal Infrastructure to ~~improve~~enhance the physical environment for everyone using the road through engineering.

WHEREAS, speeding and dangerous driving are serious concerns for Nashvillians with fatalities related to traffic accidents increasing nearly 75% over a five-year period, from 80 in 2018 to 139 in 2023; and

WHEREAS, Vision Zero is an international strategy to eliminate traffic fatalities and serious injuries on Nashville roads and is implemented in Nashville and Davidson County by the Nashville Department of Transportation and Multimodal Infrastructure (“NDOT”) ~~to eliminate traffic fatalities and serious injuries on Nashville roads~~; and

WHEREAS, Vision Zero focuses on the five Es – Engineering, Education, Encouragement, Evaluation, and Enforcement; and

WHEREAS, the first E, Engineering, means improving the physical environment for traffic, including vehicles, walking, and biking; and

WHEREAS, the fifth E, Enforcement, cannot be overlooked and is essential to the success of Vision Zero and the safety of all Nashvillians on our streets; and

WHEREAS, enforcement is ~~critical~~essential for ~~producing~~supporting safe and responsible and responsible behaviors on the road and building respect among road users through partnerships with community groups and law enforcement; and

WHEREAS, engineering can be improved through the planning, policy, design, deployment, operations, and maintenance of transportation capital projects and traffic control devices; and

WHEREAS, the Metropolitan Nashville Police Department (“MNPDP”) is charged with enforcing moving violations, ~~however, traffic stops by MNPDP dropped from 200,546 in 2018 to 29,516 in 2023, a reduction of over 85%. However, critiques of racially biased traffic stops as well as a focus on more efficient uses of police resources with the implementation of Chief Drake’s core pillar of precision policing have resulted in a reduction in the number of traffic stops~~; and

WHEREAS, in 2016, Gideon’s Army released the Driving While Black report, which highlighted racially biased enforcement patterns within MNPDP regarding its traffic stops. In particular, from 2011-2015, MNPDP officers stopped more Black drivers than the total number of Black residents in Nashville (an average of 1,122 stop per 1,000 Black residents). MNPDP’s average overall stop rate for all drivers was 7.7 times the national average from 2011-2015. However, over 80% of the stops resulted in only a warning; and

WHEREAS, in 2018, the city contracted with the Policing Project, in partnership with the Stanford Computational Policy Lab, to perform cost-benefit analysis assessment of the use of traffic stops to address crime. That study found that the excessive stops had no impact on crime, and that there were racial disparities in MNPDP’s traffic stops particularly for nonmoving violations (e.g., broken taillights, expired tags, etc.); and

WHEREAS, traffic stops by MNPD officers dropped from 200,546 in 2018 to under 56,000 in 2019 to under 26,000 in 2022. Enforcement of moving violations and reckless conditions can be achieved without resorting to pretextual stops; and

WHEREAS, in recent years, MNPD has made efforts to improve traffic enforcement, including focusing on stops involving reckless driving, DUI, speeding, and distracted driving. Traffic stops increased to approximately 30,000 in 2023; and

WHEREAS, MNPD must ~~increase~~ continue to prioritize traffic enforcement in order ~~these areas~~ to keep Nashvillians safe on roads across Davidson County and to avoid returning to the biased enforcement highlighted by the Driving While Black report and the Policing Project; and

WHEREAS, the first E, Engineering, means improving the physical environment for everyone using the road; and

WHEREAS, engineering can be improved through the planning, policy, design, and traffic control devices; and

WHEREAS, better engineering and ~~enforcement and engineering~~ will help make roads safer for all who use them.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT OF NASHVILLE AND DAVIDSON COUNTY THAT:

Section 1. That the Metropolitan County Council goes on record as urging the Metropolitan Nashville Police Department to ~~increase~~ improve traffic enforcement by prioritizing reckless driving, DUI, speeding, and distracted driving and the Nashville Department of Transportation and Multimodal Infrastructure to ~~improve~~ enhance the physical environment for everyone using the road through engineering.

Section 2. That the Metropolitan County Council further requests the Metropolitan Nashville Police Department provide to the Council a plan for ~~increased~~ improved traffic enforcement, including a review of non-police traffic enforcement options, and any requests for additional resources that could be provided by the Council, other recommendations by March 31, 2025.

Section 3. That the Metropolitan County Council further requests the Nashville Department of Transportation and Multimodal Infrastructure provide to the Council an update on its suggestions and recommendations to further enhance the Neighborhood Streets Traffic Calming Program by March 31, 2025.

Section 4. This Resolution shall take effect from and after its adoption, the welfare of The Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County requiring it.

INTRODUCED BY:

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Members of Council