



November 7, 2014

Dear Mayor Murray,

Thank you for attending the Vigil Walk and Solutions Meeting for Zeytuna Edo on Saturday, November 1.

Thank you for not just attending, but for speaking thoughtful words, for comforting a distraught family, and for giving so much of your time to listen to a whole community with an open heart.

You did true work in building a more just, empathetic, and democratic city. What you said and did was noted, appreciated, and shared by many more than the 100 people who were with you at the Solutions Meeting. Thank you.

You heard from parents who were in pain because their beloved little girl was broken on our streets. You heard from many who live near Zeytuna who fear traffic violence when they and their children take ordinary trips to the store or to school. You heard from many who lamented an unresponsive police force. You listened carefully and you responded honestly.

You clearly appreciate, by your words and actions, the vital role new immigrants play in Seattle. They are creative, strong, entrepreneurial, family-oriented people. You understand how important it is to embrace newly arrived Seattleites into our city. Saturday's Solutions Meeting provided a rare opportunity to build bridges and hear deep core values from many people.

Here is what I heard at the Solutions Meeting – some as yet unsolved problems, and some preliminary solutions.

Problem 1: We need our police to work effectively

- **Crime scene investigations.** Zeytuna's family shared their frustration that while the vehicle that hit their daughter was impounded, no obvious work has been done since by the police to identify the driver. The family believes Seattle Police crime scene investigators are overwhelmed by too many cases. Zeytuna's family wants action.
- **Traffic enforcement.** Zeytuna's family and the broader community told of their fear of crossing the street because of speeding and distracted drivers, their fear of walking along our streets because there are no visible officers at work, their fear for their children who may be hit by someone running a red light, their fear of people who do not yield to pedestrians and who make turns without checking intersections. Rarely are these traffic violations monitored or ticketed.
- **Emergency response.** Several community members spoke passionately about police response being too slow during emergency situations. A friend of Zeytuna's family got in his car and followed the driver who hit Zeytuna but slow police response meant the hit-and-run driver was not apprehended.

Solutions

- You committed to finding out more about the investigation into Zeytuna's hit-and-run and committed to share what you learned with Zeytuna's family.
- You offered to set up a community meeting with Seattle Police Chief Kathleen O'Toole to address some of the more systemic problems noted above.



Problem 2: The community wants to be able to use our streets safely, without fear of being hit. In particular, they fear traffic violence impacting children and the most vulnerable adults.

Solutions (I've grouped the solutions from most local to citywide.)

- **Traffic calming before fatalities happen.** People living near Rainier Vista commented that they could not convince Seattle Department of Transportation to install traffic calming solutions – speed tables, curb bumps, traffic signals – without evidence of multiple reports of collisions and injuries. Community members reported many immigrant people hesitate to report traffic violence. **Your response was encouraging. You said Seattle is beginning to look at how to install traffic safety control devices *before* injuries and property damage occur.**
- **Speed tables.** Because so many children and elders live on both sides of MLK Way S in Rainier Vista and need to walk, traffic needs to slow at intersections. Speed tables are a quick fix to slow traffic at the Genesee intersection where Zeytuna was hit. Other intersections with many people living near them could also use speed tables or other traffic calming measures.
- **Education.** Seattle Department of Transportation offered a well-attended (75 people last week!) Play Street/Traffic Safety class to teach children and their families how to cross busy streets more safely. Prioritize more of these education classes.
- **Corridor Study.** Seattle Department of Transportation is starting the next round of Rainier Avenue South Safety Corridor Planning. Ideally, the corridor safety project will look at MLK Way S, and support a high level of service for people who must walk on these busy streets.
- **Signal timing.** A UW School of Public Health study in 2013 found traffic signals were timed to change so quickly that people did not have enough time to cross Rainier Ave S. These traffic signals were non-compliant for people walking. The City needs to evaluate if this situation also exists on MLK Way S – and fix it!
- **Sound Transit.** Light rail bisects MLK Way S and in the process bisects many communities. When trains reset signals, people can wait as long as six minutes to get across the street. Our City needs to work with Sound Transit to prioritize the movement of people walking.
- **Freight corridors.** MLK Way S is a busy freight corridor and moving goods is a prime function of this street. We agree with one of the community members who said that “no truck driver wants to hit a child.” Freight drivers are safe, alert professionals. We agree with your strong support for the movement of freight. We’ll continue to work with you and the Freight Board on the safe, efficient movement of goods in our city.
- **Enforcement.** Traffic violations are rarely enforced. See Problem 1, above. Solutions pending.
- **Speed limits.** Several people raised the question of lowering the speed limit citywide to 20 or 25 miles and hour. We hope you will work with us to plan for speed reduction throughout Seattle.
- **Vision Zero.** Mayor Bill de Blasio signed Vision Zero into law in October and the default speed limit throughout New York City will lower from 30 to 25 miles per hour beginning on November 7. Vision Zero is a package of traffic safety actions that is intended prevent future traffic fatalities in New York City. Let’s do even more than New York to end traffic violence!



Seattle Neighborhood Greenways has done, and sadly will continue to do, Memorial Walks and Bike Rides for people who die while walking and biking. We produce these events collaboratively with local community groups and the victims' families. The Vigil for Zeytuna was done in partnership with Bike Works and Rainier Valley Greenways. We work with City departments and elected leaders.

We have also done a few Vigil Walks for people who have suffered serious injuries from traffic violence, as we did for Zeytuna and her family. Every Walk is followed by a Solutions Meeting that provides an opportunity for the family and community impacted by traffic violence to be heard by City leaders and staff who can offer solutions. **You or a representative of you office has attended every one of these events this year. Thank you.**

We'll continue to work closely with you until Seattle is a place where public streets are places where people can talk, walk, bike, shop, and get to know each other safely and without fear, no matter where they live.

Thank you for your hard work and dedication to your job as Mayor of Seattle.

We support you.

Cathy Tuttle, Executive Director
Seattle Neighborhood Greenways

From <https://www.flickr.com/groups/seagreenways/pool/>

