



West Palm Beach

SAFETY ACTION PLAN

The Safe Way Forward

Safety Assessment

04.15.26



WEST PALM BEACH



The Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) program requires a data driven approach to transportation safety.

This Safety Action Plan is supported by a federal grant from the US Department of Transportation (USDOT) Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) program. The overall goal for the SS4A program and for the West Palm Beach Safety Action Plan is to prevent and eliminate the most severe crashes in West Palm Beach.

The SS4A program has several requirements for the Action Plan planning process including goal setting, safety analysis, community engagement, and the development of specific policies, programs, and projects to achieve the goal of Vision Zero.

This safety assessment establishes baseline safety trends in West Palm Beach. Its findings will guide the identification of projects, policies, and programs aimed at enhancing transportation safety and guiding the City towards achieving its Vision Zero goals.



Achieving Vision Zero will require a proactive and intentional approach to transportation safety.

Vision Zero is an international movement focused on eliminating traffic deaths and severe injuries. Vision Zero principles have been embraced by the USDOT, the Florida Department of Transportation, and municipalities such as Delray Beach.

Vision Zero recognizes that although people make mistakes, no one should lose their life as a result.

Vision Zero principles are:

- Death and serious injuries are unacceptable.
- Humans make mistakes.
- Humans are vulnerable.
- Responsibility is shared.
- Safety is proactive.
- Redundancy is crucial.

By taking a proactive and data-driven approach, this safety assessment provides the baseline information to create a proactive roadmap to achieve Vision Zero.

TRADITIONAL APPROACH VS VISION ZERO APPROACH TO TRANSPORTATION SAFETY

Traditional Approach	Vision Zero Approach
Traffic deaths are INEVITABLE	Traffic deaths are PREVENTABLE
PERFECT human behavior	Integrate HUMAN FAILING in approach
Prevent COLLISIONS	Prevent FATAL AND SEVERE CRASHES
INDIVIDUAL responsibility	SYSTEMS approach
Saving lives is EXPENSIVE	Saving lives is NOT EXPENSIVE



The focus for this project is eliminating the most severe crashes in the city.

In 2018, the City of West Palm Beach adopted a resolution committing to achieving a goal of no severe traffic injuries or fatalities. The Safety Action Plan will provide a roadmap for the City to achieve this adopted goal.

Throughout this safety assessment, the term “severe crashes” will refer to two types of crashes:

- **Serious injury crashes:** a crash resulting in broken bones, significant burns, unconsciousness, paralysis, internal injuries, and/or long-term impairments of bodily function
- **Fatal crashes:** a crash resulting in death.

Additionally, this plan will also prioritize protecting the **most vulnerable**, or those outside of motor vehicles, who have a higher risk of being involved in severe crashes.

RESOLUTION NO. 244-18

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WEST PALM BEACH, FLORIDA, ESTABLISHING THE GOAL OF ZERO TRAFFIC FATALITIES ON WEST PALM BEACH STREETS; ADOPTING VISION ZERO AS THE POLICY FOR ROAD AND TRAFFIC SAFETY FOR THE CITY OF WEST PALM BEACH; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

WHEREAS, traffic crashes are among the leading cause of deaths and injuries in the world, the United States, and the City of West Palm Beach; and

WHEREAS, according to the Florida Department of Health, pedestrians and bicyclists are the most vulnerable road users and account for over half of the state’s traffic deaths; and

WHEREAS, according to the Governors Highway Safety Association, the national average of pedestrians killed has increased by nearly 22% since 2014; and

WHEREAS, death and injury on our streets is unacceptable; and

WHEREAS, Vision Zero is a traffic safety policy and system which provides a framework for reducing traffic deaths and serious injuries through a combination of engineering, education, and enforcement measures; and



The Way Forward is the City’s strategy to guide transportation decision-making and investment.

The City has adopted a citywide mobility plan that establishes a long-term, multimodal vision for how people move throughout West Palm Beach. That framework addresses all modes of travel and sets citywide goals related to safety, access, connectivity, economic vitality, sustainability, and quality of life.

This Safety Action Plan is intended to support and implement that broader mobility vision by providing additional detail specific to transportation safety. It does not replace or supersede the City’s Mobility Plan. Instead, it builds upon adopted policies by identifying safety-focused strategies, network elements, and implementation tools that advance shared citywide objectives.



WEST PALM BEACH

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The Way Forward: Community Mobility + Safety Planning

Let’s continue to shape the future of transportation in West Palm Beach! Learn about the proposed low-stress bike network, upcoming roadway improvements designed to increase capacity for all users, and share your safety concerns from anywhere in the city to inform our Roadway Safety Action Plan. Your voice matters—let’s build a safer, more connected city together!

At this event you will see the latest progress and provide additional feedback on various transportation and mobility initiatives that over 500 people have already contributed input. This includes information on the following projects:

1. Citywide Mobility Plan

2. Citywide Bicycle Master Plan

3. Roadway Safety Action Plan



Traffic crashes are a persistent trend in West Palm Beach.

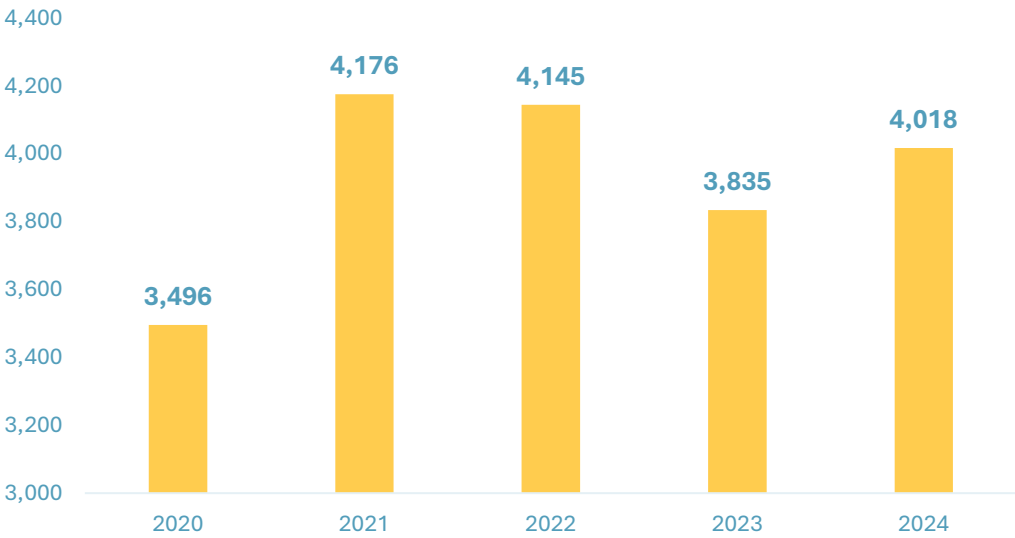
Crash data from the past five years show that West Palm Beach averages approximately 4,000 total crashes annually, including an average of 65 severe crashes per year. These figures indicate a stable, long-term trend of crashes across all severity levels rather than short-term fluctuation.

The ongoing number of severe crashes shows that serious injuries and deaths are not accidents—they are a result of how streets currently function. Making changes now can prevent future harm and save lives.

Note crash numbers for this assessment exclude those occurring on I-95 and the Florida Turnpike.

Data Source: Florida Department of Transportation

Crashes by Year



Average number of crashes per day over the past five years.

Severe Crashes by Year



Average number of severe crashes per month over the past five years.

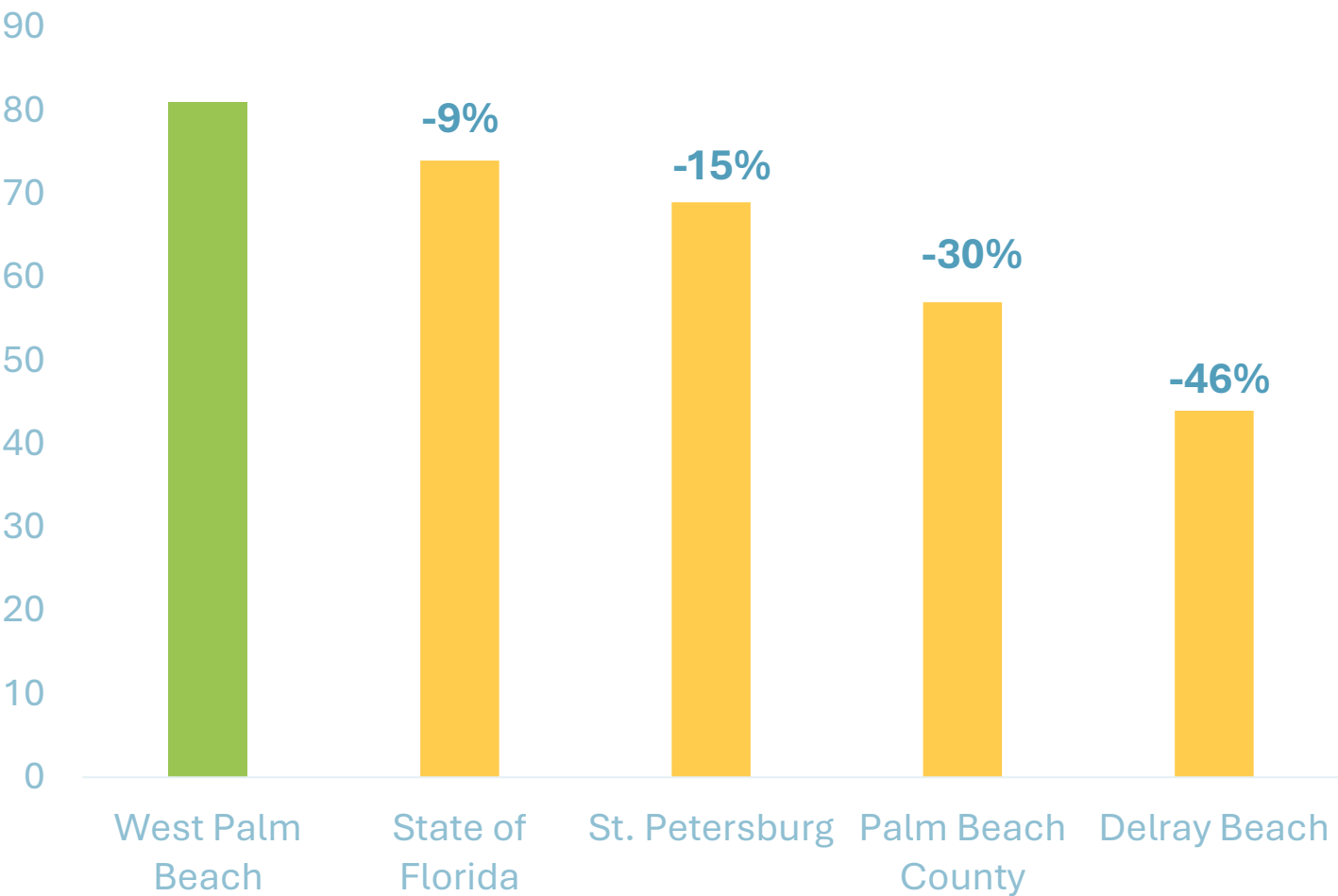
Traveling in West Palm Beach carries a higher risk of serious crashes compared to the state and peer communities.

West Palm Beach experiences severe crashes at a higher crash rate per capita than the State of Florida, St. Petersburg, Palm Beach County, and Delray Beach. This means that people traveling in West Palm Beach face a comparatively higher risk of being involved in a serious crash.

Also, the fact that West Palm Beach compares unfavorably to peer communities also shows that safer outcomes are achievable. Peer cities and the county experience fewer crashes per person, indicating that different street designs, speed management strategies, and safety investments can make a real difference.

This means severe crashes in West Palm Beach are not inevitable—they can be reduced.

Severe Crashes Comparison (per 100k people)



Data Source: Florida Department of Transportation and US Census Bureau

% difference compared to the City of West Palm Beach

Achieving Vision Zero in West Palm Beach will require a multimodal approach to transportation safety.

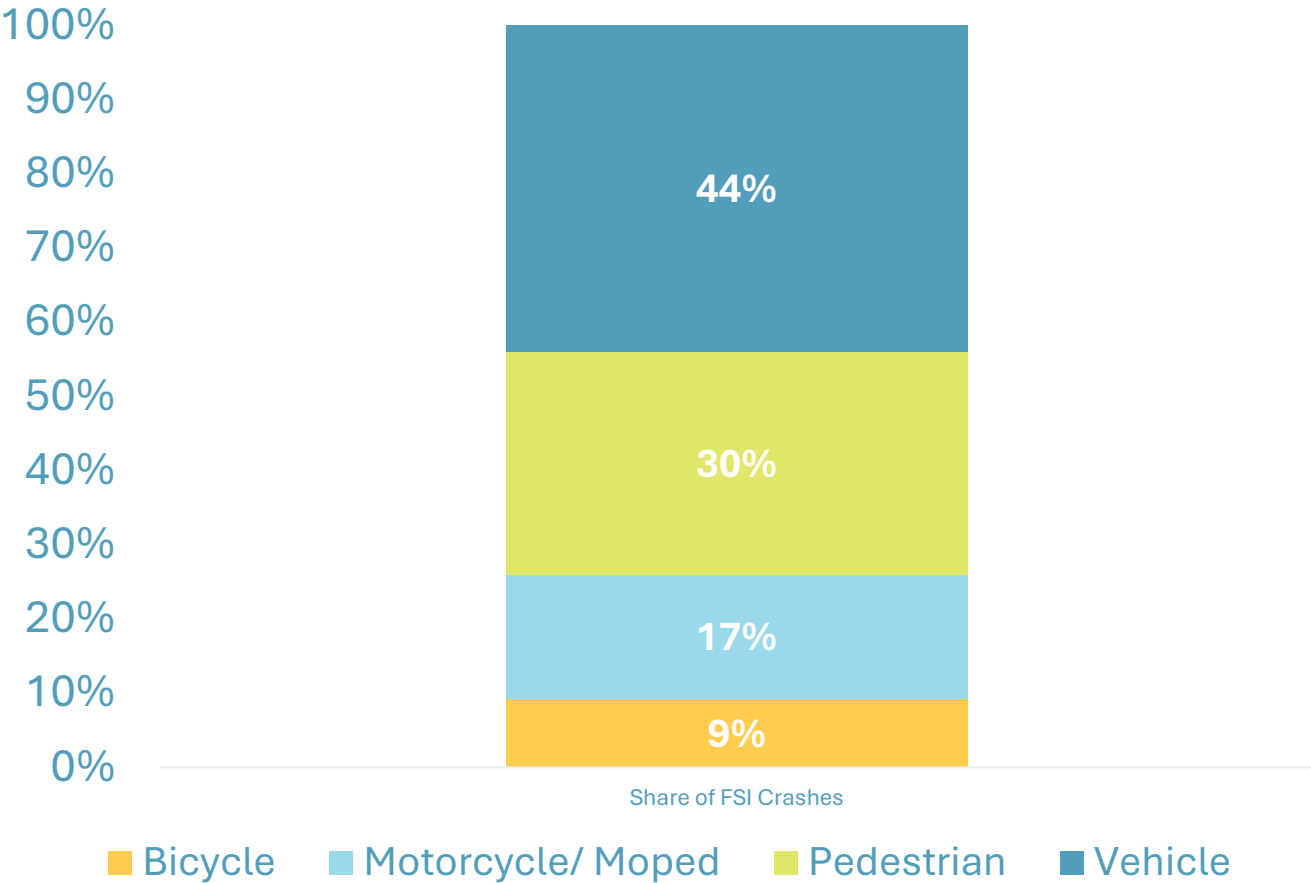
While many serious crashes involve motor vehicles, **more than half (56%) of severe crashes involve people outside of cars**—including pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorcycle or moped riders.

This matters because people who are not in cars are far more likely to be seriously injured or killed when a crash occurs.

A car-focused safety approach alone cannot address this issue. When streets are designed for high speeds and lack safe crossings, sidewalks, or bikeways, people walking and biking remain at risk—even when drivers follow the rules.

A multimodal approach designs streets for everyone, using safer crossings, slower speeds, and connected walking and biking infrastructure to prevent crashes and reduce injury severity.

Severe Crash Mode Share



Data Source: Florida Department of Transportation



How people travel in West Palm Beach strongly affects their risk of being involved in a severe crash.

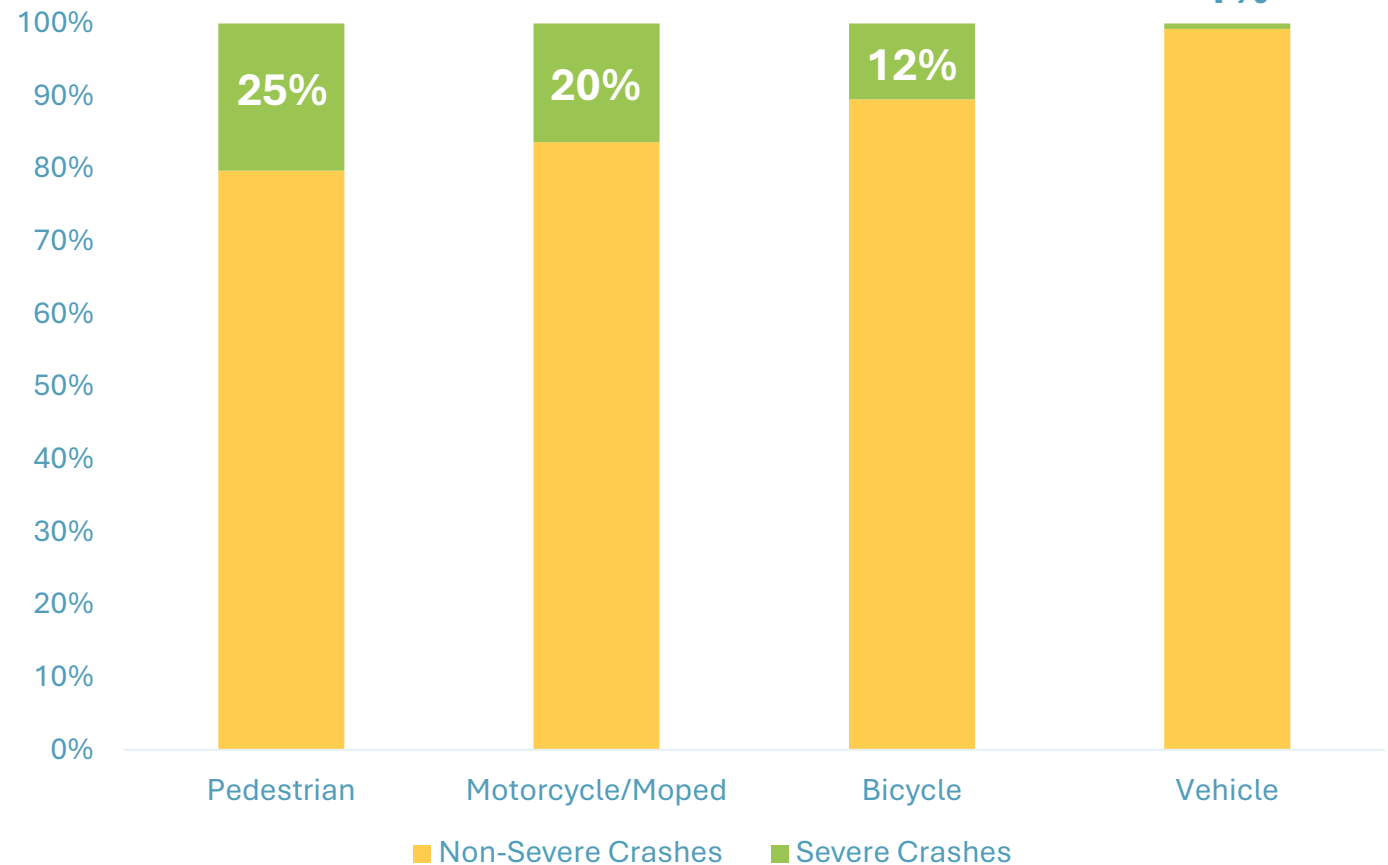
Only 1% of crashes involving people in cars result in a severe injury. However, the risk increases significantly for people outside of vehicles:

- 12% of bicycle crashes are severe
- 20% of motorcycle and moped crashes are severe
- 25% of pedestrian crashes are severe

These differences are not about personal choices or mistakes. They reflect how much protection each person has and how streets are designed.

People outside of vehicles have little physical protection, and when streets are designed for high speeds, long crossings, and fast-moving traffic, the consequences of a crash are much more severe.

Severity of Crashes by Mode



Data Source: Florida Department of Transportation

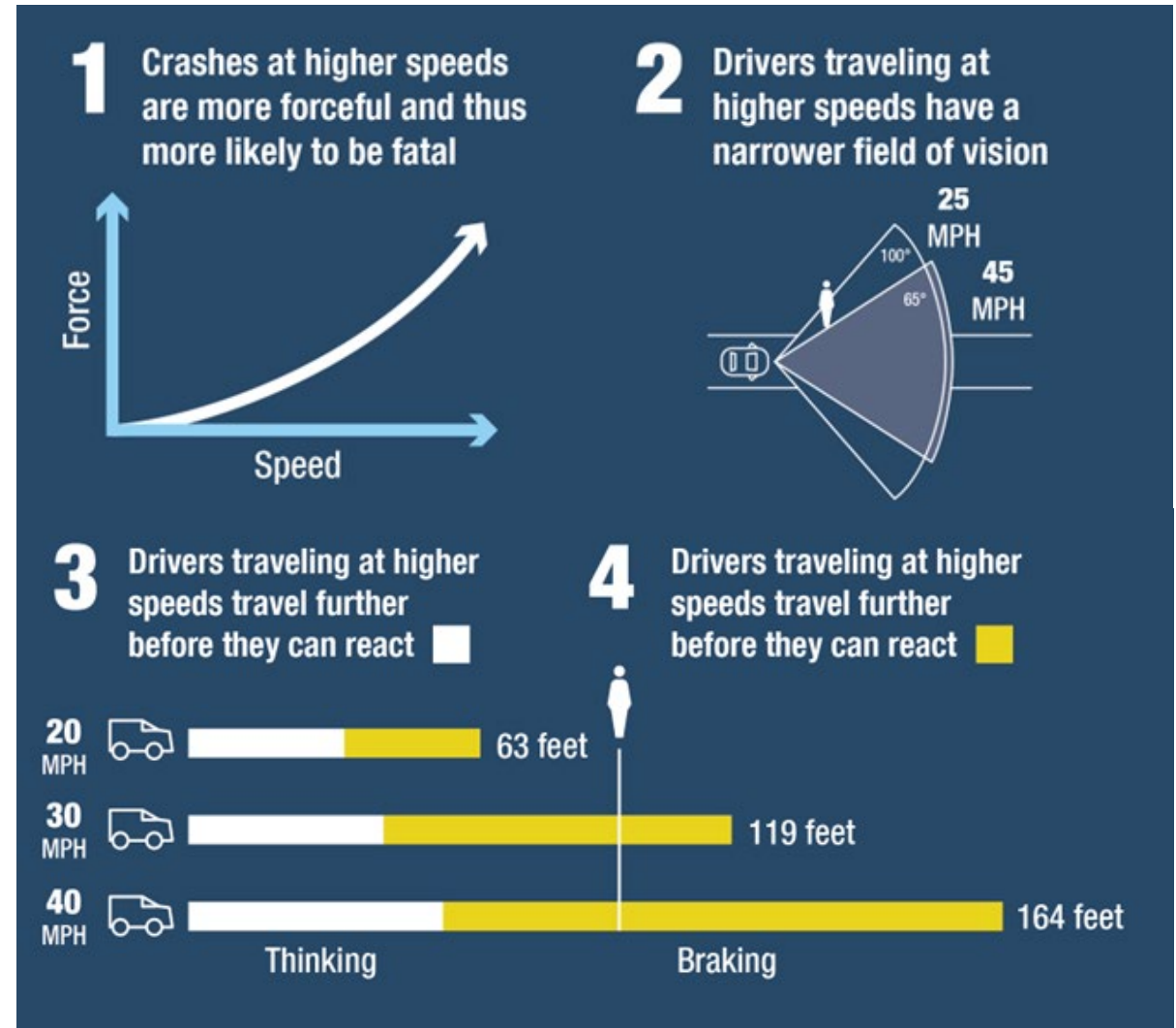


Vehicles speeds have a significant influence on the severity of crashes

As vehicle speeds increase, crashes become far more severe and more likely to result in serious injury or death.

- Four key factors explain this relationship:
- Greater force on impact
- Narrower driver field of vision
- Longer distance before reacting.
- Longer stopping distances after braking begins.

Bottom line: Even small increases in speed greatly reduce a driver's ability to see, react, and stop in time—dramatically increasing the likelihood of severe outcomes. Reducing vehicle speeds is one of the most effective strategies to prevent serious injuries and save lives.



Source: National Association of City Transportation Officials



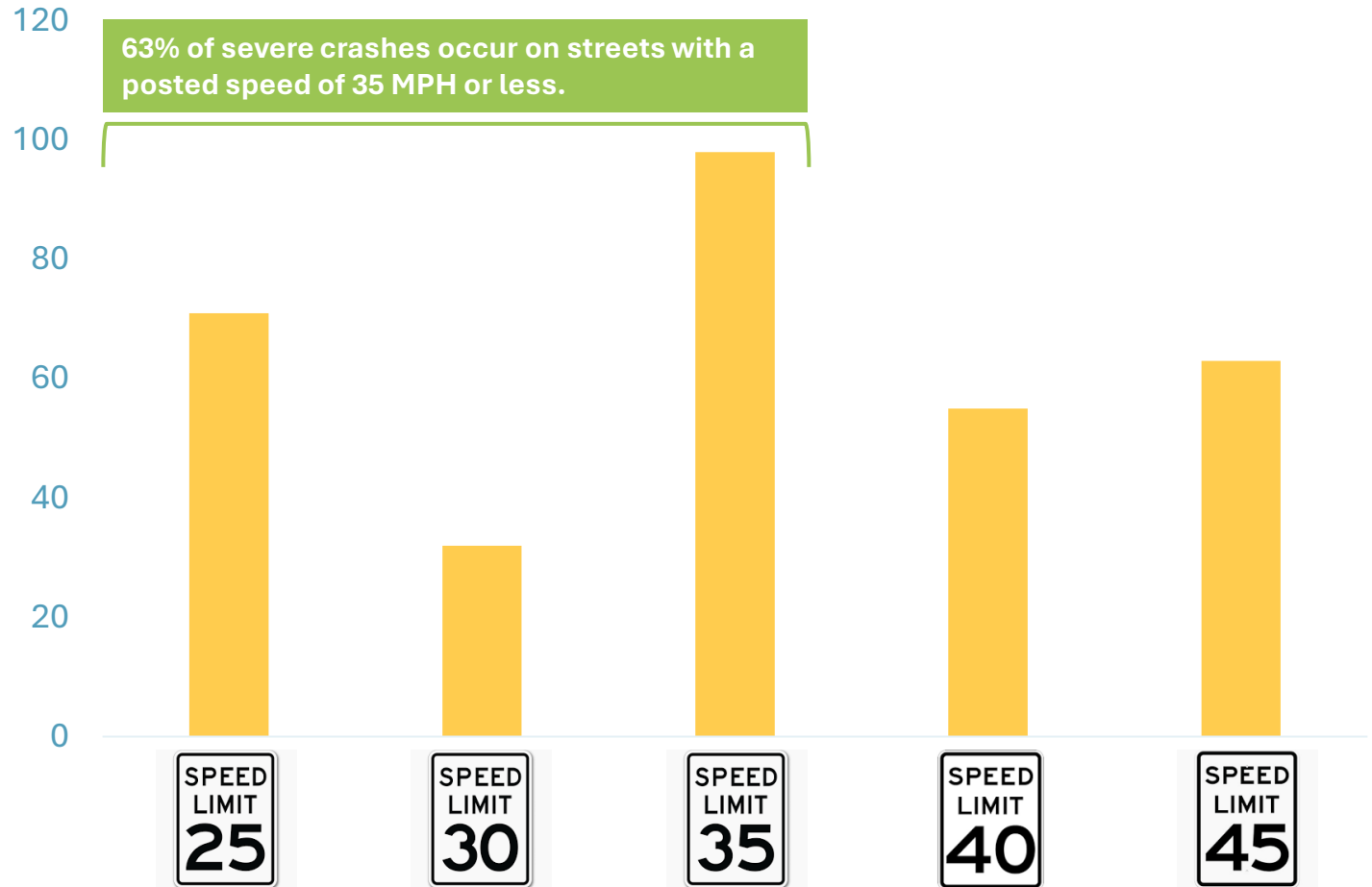
Severe crashes in West Palm Beach are occurring on roads with slower speeds.

Nearly 63% of severe crashes occur on roads with posted speed limits of 35 mph or less, many of which are local streets and corridors with higher levels of walking, biking, and other non-driving travel.

These lower-speed roads often serve neighborhoods, commercial areas, and transit access points, resulting in greater interaction between vehicles and people outside of cars. Given the high share of pedestrians, bicyclists, and riders involved in severe crashes, even crashes occurring at speeds below 35 mph can result in serious injuries or death.

This matters because it challenges a common assumption that slower streets are automatically safe. While lower speeds reduce risk, they do not eliminate it—especially on streets where many people are walking, biking, or crossing the road.

Severe Crashes by Posted Speed



Data Source: Florida Department of Transportation



Severe crashes show that crash risk in West Palm Beach is influenced by more than just traffic volume.

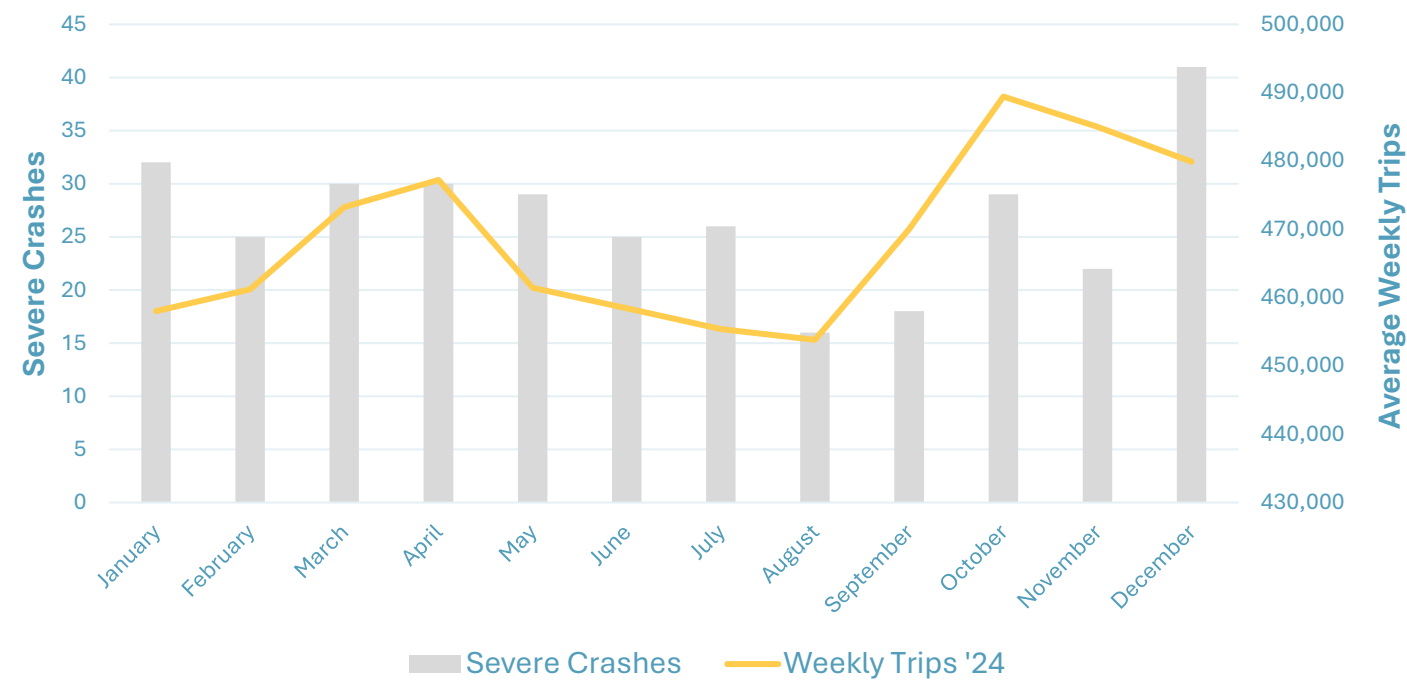
Severe crashes in West Palm Beach are highest during the winter months, particularly during the December holiday season and the Spring Break months of March and April.

While these periods coincide with increased travel activity, severe crashes also remain elevated in May, June, and July—even as overall trip volumes decline.

Understanding this pattern helps the City move beyond one-time or holiday-only safety efforts. If severe crashes stayed high only when traffic was busiest, solutions could focus narrowly on peak travel periods.

Instead, the data shows the need for sustained safety strategies that extend beyond the winter season.

Severe Crashes and Average Weekly Trips By Month



Data Source: Florida Department of Transportation and Replica



West Palm Beach requires safety strategies beyond traditional rush hour.

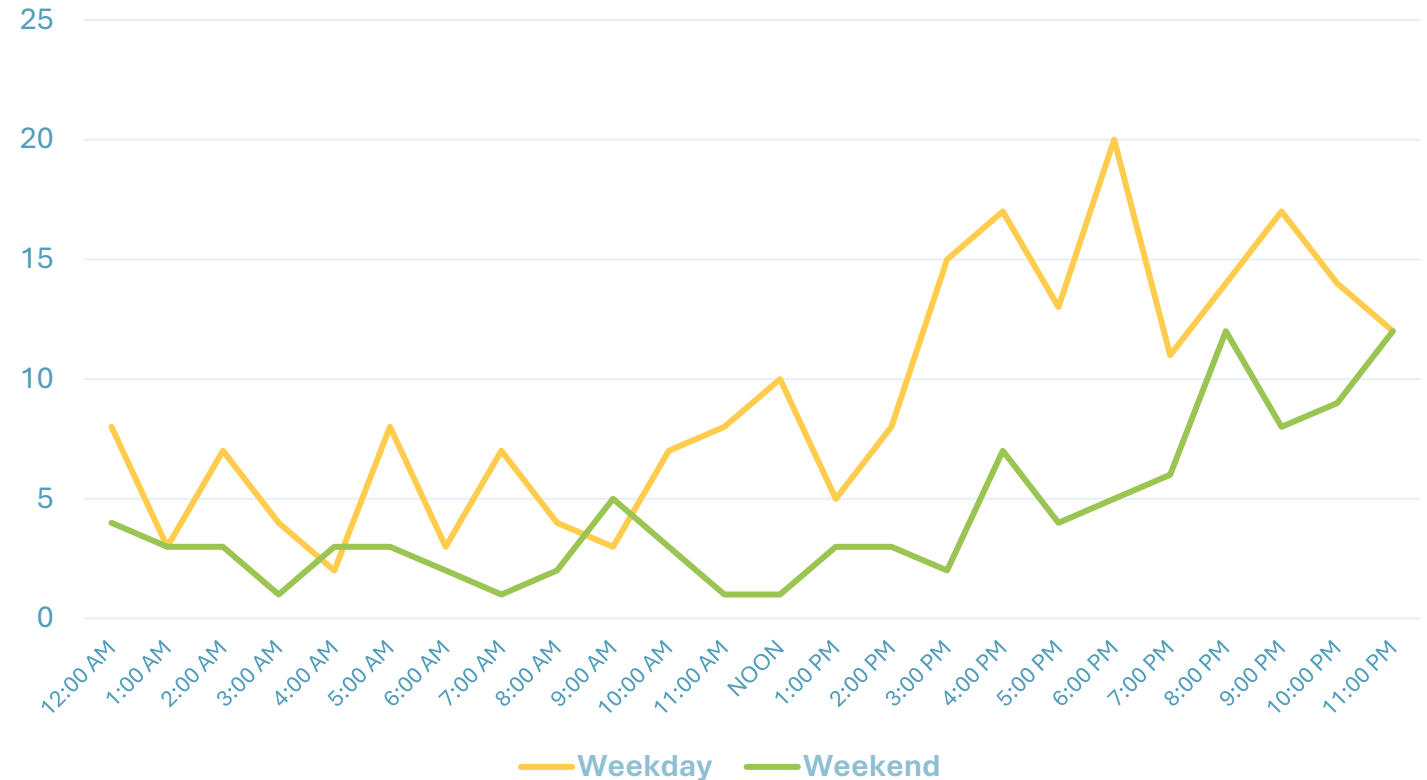
In West Palm Beach, severe crashes increase in the afternoon and remain elevated through the evening until approximately 11:00 PM on both weekdays and weekends.

Unlike many peer communities—where severe crashes peak during the evening commute and decline later at night—West Palm Beach experiences a sustained level of severe crashes well into the evening hours.

This extended risk period is likely influenced by West Palm Beach's role as a regional destination for dining, entertainment, and events, as well as a workforce that includes many evening and late-night employees.

This finding supports the need for evening-focused strategies, such as improved lighting, safer crossings, speed management, and targeted outreach and enforcement during nighttime hours.

Severe Crashes by Time of Day



Data Source: Florida Department of Transportation



Severe crashes in West Palm Beach are highly concentrated on major roadways.

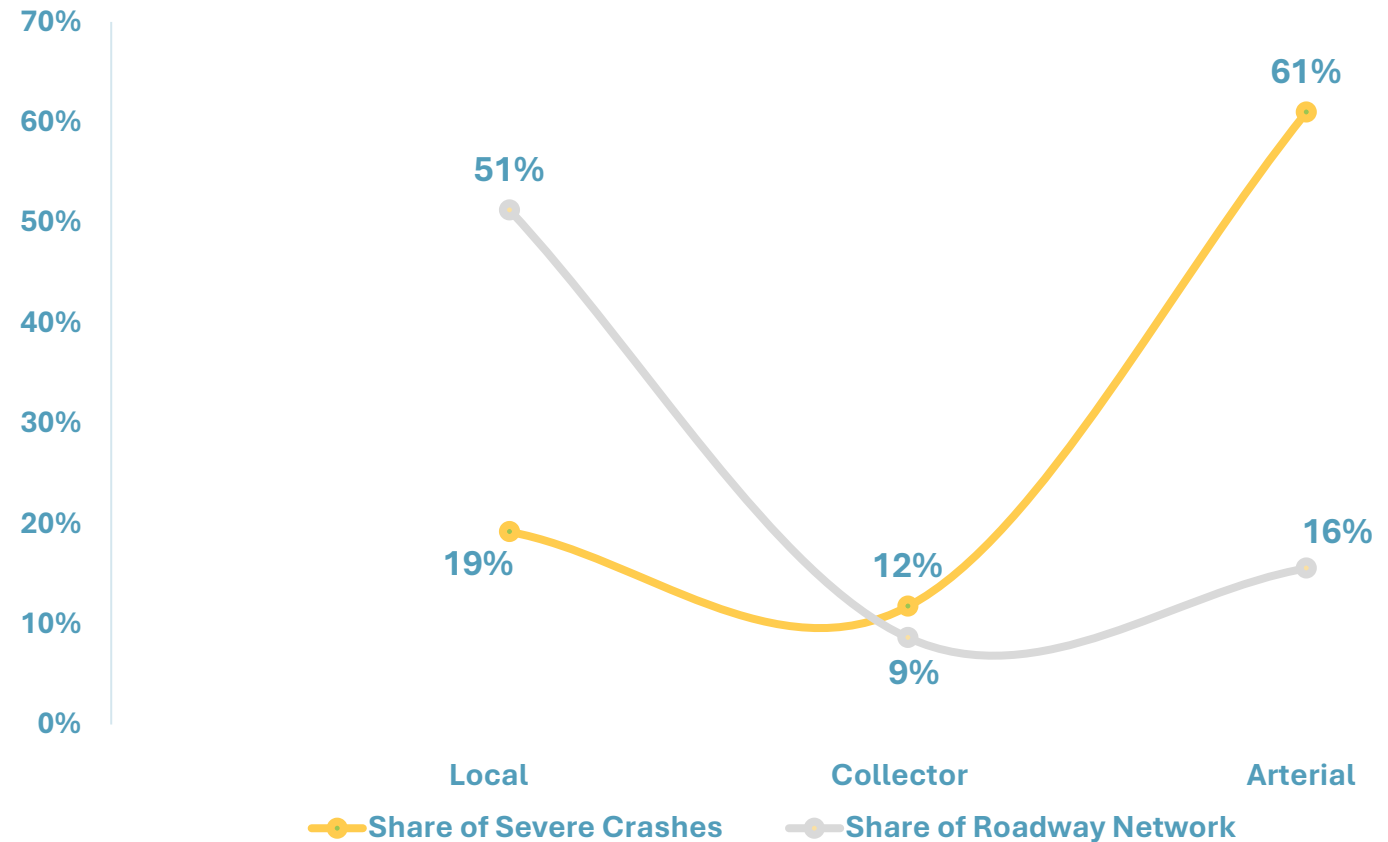
Major roads account for 61% of all severe crashes, despite making up only 16% of the City's roadway network. In contrast, neighborhood streets account for 51% of the roadway network but only 20% of severe crashes.

The fact that most severe crashes occur on a relatively small share of the roadway network means the problem is concentrated, not spread evenly across the city.

This creates a powerful opportunity: by focusing safety improvements on major corridors, West Palm Beach can reduce a large share of serious injuries and deaths

For Vision Zero, this finding supports a targeted, data-driven approach—prioritizing major roadways for speed management, safer crossings, access management, and multimodal design while maintaining neighborhood streets as low-speed, people-focused environments.

Severe Crashes by Share of Roadway Network by Roadway Classification



Data Source: Florida Department of Transportation



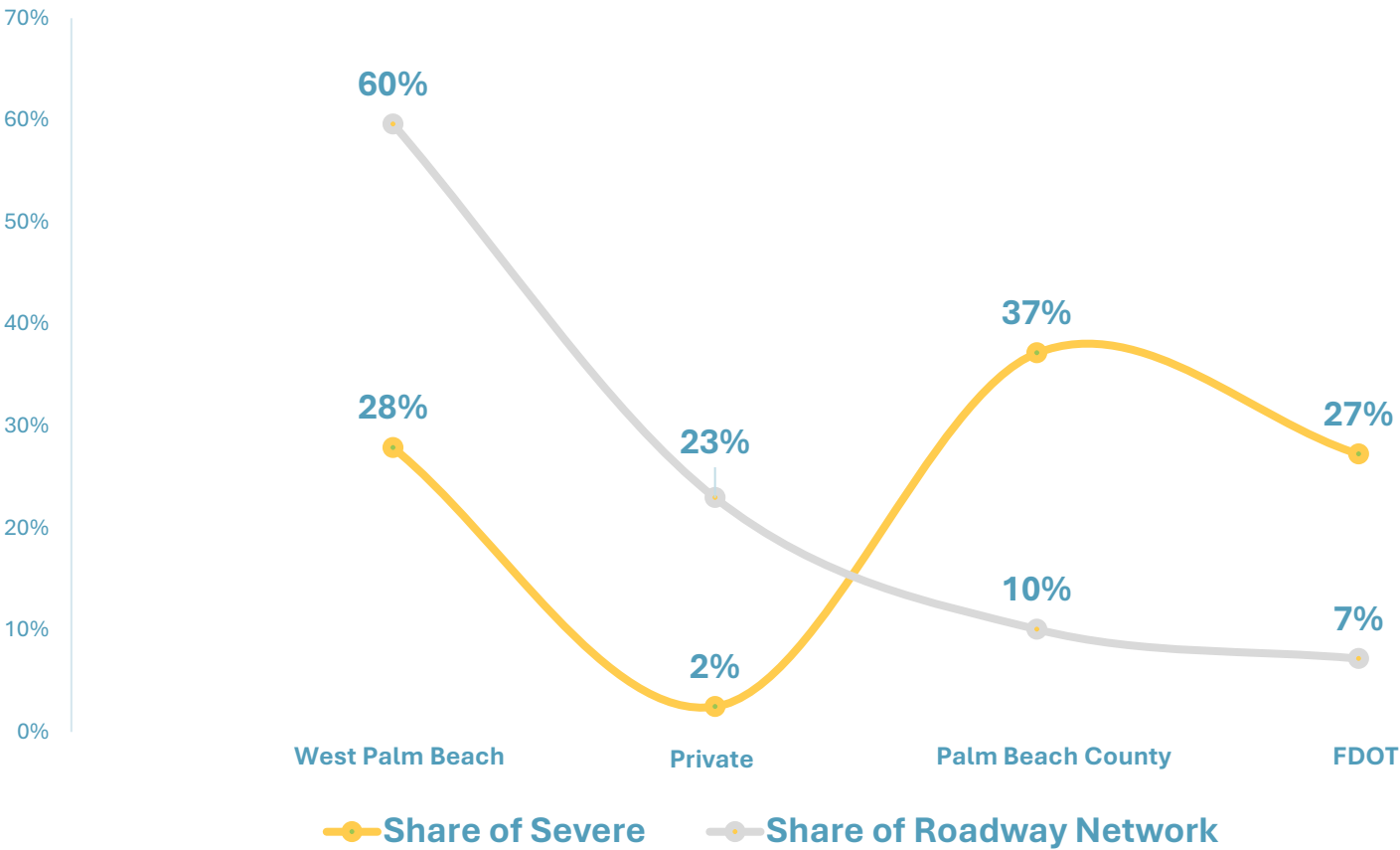
Achieving Vision Zero in West Palm Beach will require strong regional partnerships.

City-owned roads make up approximately 60% of the roadway network, yet they account for only 28% of severe crashes. In contrast, Palm Beach County and FDOT own just 17% of the roadway network within the City but account for 64% of all severe crashes.

This imbalance means that most severe crashes occur on roads outside the City’s direct control.

Strong regional partnerships will allow West Palm Beach to advocate for safer designs on the roads where the risk is highest and ensure that safety investments align with how people travel. Without this coordination, the City’s ability to eliminate severe crashes will remain limited.

Regional Share of Severe Crashes and Roadway Ownership



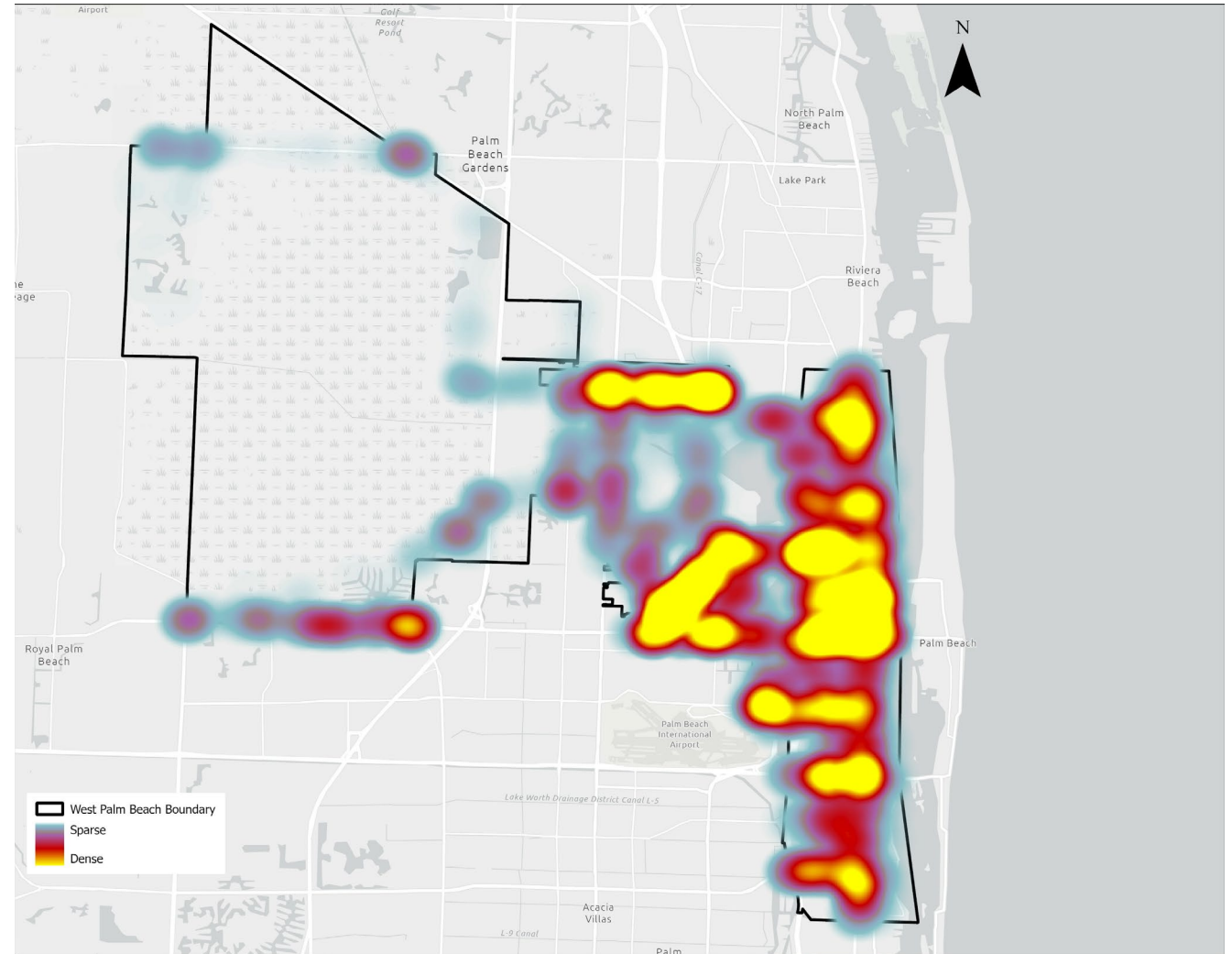
Data Source: Florida Department of Transportation



Severe crashes are concentrated on the most popular streets in the City.

A High Injury Network is developed by analyzing crash data to determine where severe crashes happen most frequently. Streets are scored based on both crash severity and crash frequency, and those with the highest scores make up the City's High-Injury Network.

The heat map illustrates crash locations over the past five years. Areas shown as “hot spots” highlight corridors and intersections where severe crashes are concentrated and where safety improvements are most urgently needed.



Data Source: Florida Department of Transportation



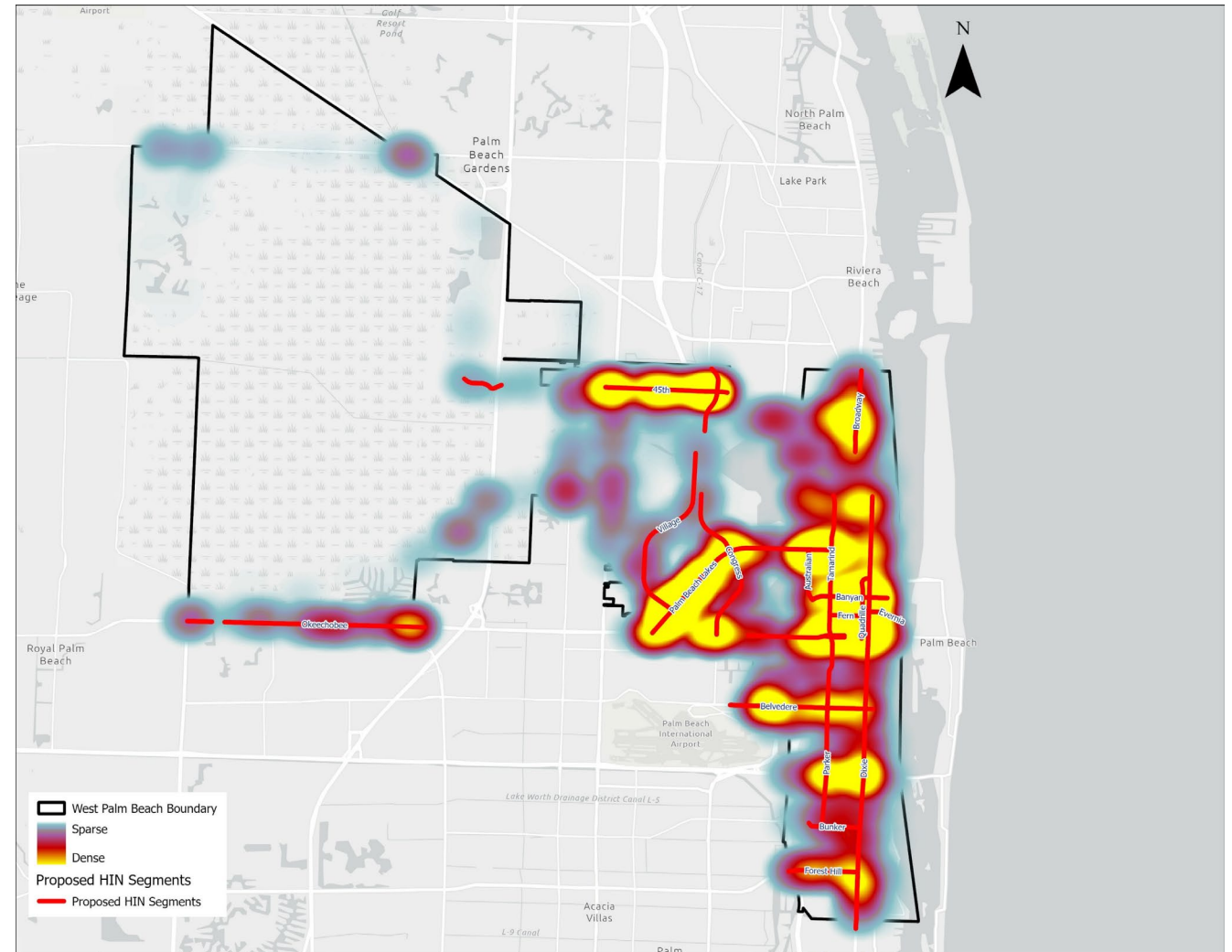
The High Injury Network is where crashes are regularly occurring in West Palm Beach.

The High Injury Network (HIN) is identified by looking at crash data, locating where the highest frequency and severity of crashes are occurring.

Roadways were scored based on crash severity and frequency. The roads with the highest scores make up the City's HIN.

West Palm Beach's HIN contributes:

- 43% of citywide crashes
- 48% of citywide severe crashes



Data Source: Florida Department of Transportation

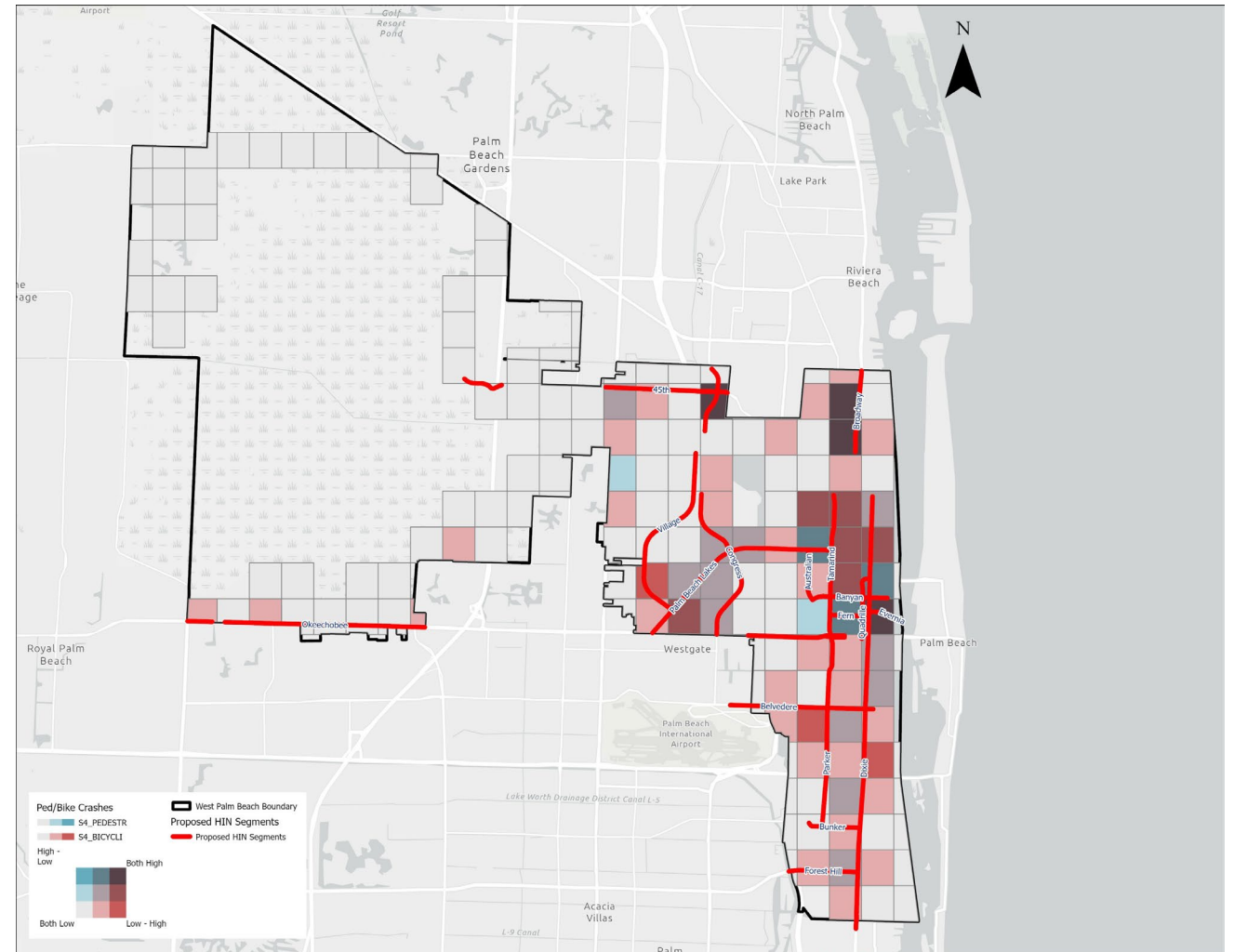


Safety needs for people walking and biking are concentrated in specific areas of the City.

This map is created to highlight where crashes involving people walking and biking occur most frequently.

The greatest concentrate of bicycle and pedestrian crashes are occurring along major streets, with the highest concentrations east of I-95, in Downtown, and along US-1.

Additionally, there are some hot spots that show up in neighborhoods. These hot spots can be used to identify areas for neighborhood traffic calming and other changes to improve safety, particularly for people walking and biking.



Data Source: Florida Department of Transportation



Six streets have been identified on the HIN as “worst offenders” for severe crashes in the City.

The Worst Offenders List contributes:

- 5% to the citywide roadway network
- 35% of severe crashes citywide

For crashes on the HIN, these six roads contribute 74% of the severe crashes.

Focusing project recommendations on these roads will play a huge part in eliminating severe crashes in West Palm Beach.

Road Name	Share of Severe Crashes Citywide	Share of Roadway Network
45 th Street	6%	1%
Okeechobee Boulevard	6%	1%
Palm Beach Lakes Boulevard	6%	1%
Broadway Avenue	6%	0%
N Congress Avenue	4%	1%
N/S Dixie Highway	7%	1%

Note: A 0% means less than .5% share of the roadway network

Data Source: Florida Department of Transportation



Disclaimer

- 23 United States Code Section 407
- Discovery and admission as evidence of certain reports and surveys.
- Notwithstanding any other provision of law, reports, surveys, schedules, lists, or data compiled or collected for the purpose of identifying, evaluating, or planning the safety enhancement of potential accident sites, hazardous roadway conditions, or railway-highway crossings, pursuant to sections 130, 144, and 148 of this title or for the purpose of developing any highway safety construction improvement project which may be implemented utilizing Federal-aid highway funds shall not be subject to discovery or admitted into evidence in a Federal or State court proceeding or considered for other purposes in any action for damages arising from any occurrence at a location mentioned or addressed in such reports, surveys, schedules, lists, or data.

