

Failed Vision

As documented in the **Failed Vision: Revamping the Roadmap to Safer Streets**, the failure of Vision Zero in San Francisco is not caused by a single factor. It is a **compound public-safety failure** that requires coordinated solutions: **consistent traffic enforcement, safer street design, and meaningful accountability for reckless drivers who cause deaths.**

Data show the scale of the problem:

- **42–43 people were killed in San Francisco traffic crashes in 2024**, the city's deadliest year since at least 2007 and well above the decade average of about **30 deaths per year.**
- Between **2018 and 2022**, an estimated **193 people died in San Francisco traffic crashes**, part of roughly **100,000 total collisions** in the city during that period.
- Traffic enforcement collapsed over the same decade: **traffic citations issued by police dropped by about 90–95% between 2014 and 2022**, according to the Civil Grand Jury analysis.

The Grand Jury concluded that **street redesign alone cannot prevent fatalities when dangerous driving is not deterred or prosecuted**, and that a lack of enforcement has contributed to a growing sense of lawlessness on city streets.

San Francisco's experience mirrors challenges seen in other California cities such as **Los Angeles** and **Sacramento**, where Vision Zero initiatives have similarly struggled when the three essential pillars of road safety are not implemented together.

Effective prevention requires addressing all three components simultaneously:

1. **Enforcement** – consistent policing and automated enforcement of dangerous driving behaviors such as speeding, red-light running, and failure to yield.
2. **Street redesign** – safer intersections, daylighting, protected bike lanes, traffic calming, and redesign of high-injury corridors.
3. **Accountability** – serious legal consequences for reckless drivers whose actions result in severe injury or death.

Without all three working together, Vision Zero remains an aspiration rather than a functioning safety system while the number of fatalities increases daily.