

November 2024



Steering Committee Meeting #4



# Agenda

- 1 Engagement Recap
- 2 Vision
- 3 Road Safety & Safety Countermeasures



# Engagement Recap

# Envision Williamson Project Phases

## Create a Vision

- Gather **feedback from the community** on their current experiences and desired future for Williamson Road
- Develop a **vision for Williamson Road** that can support a safe, caring, and economically vibrant community in which all have equitable opportunities
- 3 steering committee meetings

April – October 2024

## Review Choices

- Share consensus-driven **vision statement**
- Identify **various safety improvements** for Williamson Road to achieve Vision
- Gather **feedback from the community**

November 2024 – February 2025

## Select Options

- Develop a **corridor plan with recommended safety improvements** along the corridor
- Gather **feedback from the community**







February–June 2025

# Envision Williamson will address safety improvements along Williamson Road and build consensus around a vision

This initiative includes:

- **Community engagement** to align on perceived challenges and opportunities and develop a vision for Williamson Road
- **Technical support** to review safety and mobility challenges and recommend transportation improvements for Williamson Road
- **Guidance on funding opportunities** for implementing the recommended improvements for Williamson Road

# Community Engagement Tools Used

|  | Type                     | Description  |
|--|--------------------------|--|
|    | <b>Webpage</b>           | Webpage on City of Roanoke website to inform community about the project phases, goals, and timeline.  |
|    | <b>Postcard</b>          | Printed product with intent to inform community about the project phases, goals, and timeline. Handed out at events.   |
|    | <b>Online survey</b>     | Online survey can collect broad community feedback. Link to survey from Webpage, Postcard, and shared at community events.   |
|   | <b>Presentations</b>     | Presentations at existing meetings.  |
|  | <b>Engagement Boards</b> | Printed products with online survey questions that allow for in-person participatory feedback at events.   |
|  | <b>Focus Groups</b>      | Targeted conversations and meetings with specific groups who hadn't been heard from previous outreach, including business owners, schools/churches, and neighborhood groups. |

# Key Takeaways from Engagement

## How do you experience Williamson Road today? What attracts people to Williamson Road?

### **Fast and erratic traffic**

- Speeding and tailgating
- Irrational traffic
- People in the street
- Distracted driving

### **Disjointed and visually distracting**

- No sense of place
- Hard to tell where you are on the road with vacant storefronts

### **Small and diverse businesses**

- International businesses
- Diversity is an asset

### **Hard to cross the street**

- Lack of sidewalks
- Hard to walk
- Not just for pedestrians – businesses people won't go to because no way to safely get out of the parking lot

## How would you like to experience Williamson Road in the future?

### **Easier access**

- Better sidewalks and crossings
- Better traffic patterns
- Businesses accessible from both travel directions
- Consistent speed and slower traffic

### **Economic development**

- Encourage small businesses to thrive and add new businesses (bookstore, health food store)
- Should function like a main street of the city
- Better signage for businesses

### **Neighborhood feel**

- Neighborhood friendly/walk to school friendly
- "Not just a hood, but a neighborhood"
- Improve look of older buildings
- Want to see more people out on the street
- Public art
- Street trees and landscaping

# Focus Group Feedback

Focus groups were asked what attracts people to Williamson Road. Common answers are below.



# **Creating a Vision for Williamson Road**

# What words represent what you want the Williamson Road Corridor and Neighborhood to embody in the future?



**City Vision:** The City of Roanoke is a safe, caring, and economically vibrant community in which all have equitable opportunities to live, learn, work, play, and prosper.

What resonates for you?



# Visioning Brainstorm

- A vibrant business and residential district and destination where people have safe opportunities to live, work, and play.
- Vibrant community that offers safe opportunity to work, live, and play.
- Add phrase “connected community” - Residents that live there should feel that the area is accessible. Customers can participate in businesses by having access to businesses.
- Not separate from downtown, but connected – “midtown”.
- Add “Accessible” – to cars, bikes, pedestrians, buses, bus riders, people using wheelchairs (all modes)
- Work, play, eat
- Williamson Road: Where Roanoke connects, creates, and comes alive – driving a safe, vibrant, and accessible future full of opportunity.
- Drive = as a representation of a person’s drive and motivation/small businesses
- A sense of place – should support all road users so that all can experience Williamson Road
- Include “destination” – Williamson shouldn’t just be a connector.
- Williamson Road: a destination/neighborhood where Roanoke **connects**, creates, and comes alive – always driving a safe, vibrant, sustainable, and accessible future full of opportunity.
- Should we use community instead of future, to be more inclusive of the community and neighborhoods living nearby?
- A “destination neighborhood” should still have a neighborhood feel
- Prioritize pedestrian safety
- Efficiency of movement
- Improvement
- Sustainability
- Williamson Road: where Roanoke **connects**, creates, and comes alive – always driving a safe, vibrant, sustainable, and accessible community full of opportunity.

# Proposed Vision Statement

Williamson Road: a vibrant business and residential community where Roanoke connects, creates, and comes alive; supporting and sparking sustainable, safe, and accessible destinations.

***What's happening on  
Williamson Road today?***

*Road Safety*

# Williamson Road:

- Is an urban arterial with ~15,000 vehicle trips daily (2022).
- Has safety concerns around **inadequate visibility**, **excessive speeds**, **no separation of road users**, **difficulty turning in and out of businesses**, and **distracted driving**.
- Does not accommodate multiple roadway user types due to inadequate infrastructure for walkers, bikers, and people in wheelchairs.



Vehicles  
Accessing  
Businesses

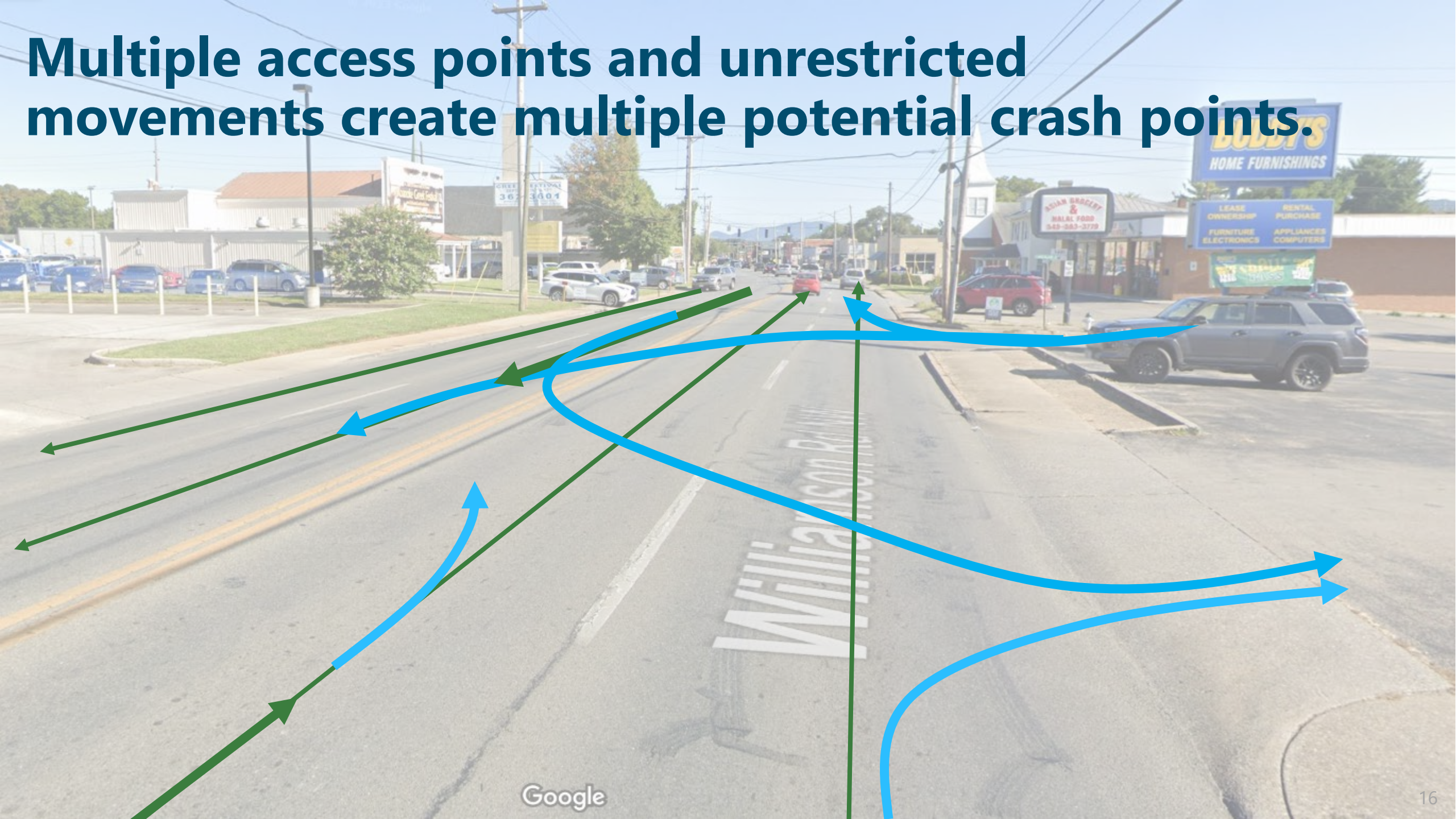


Speed/Erratic  
Driving  
Behavior



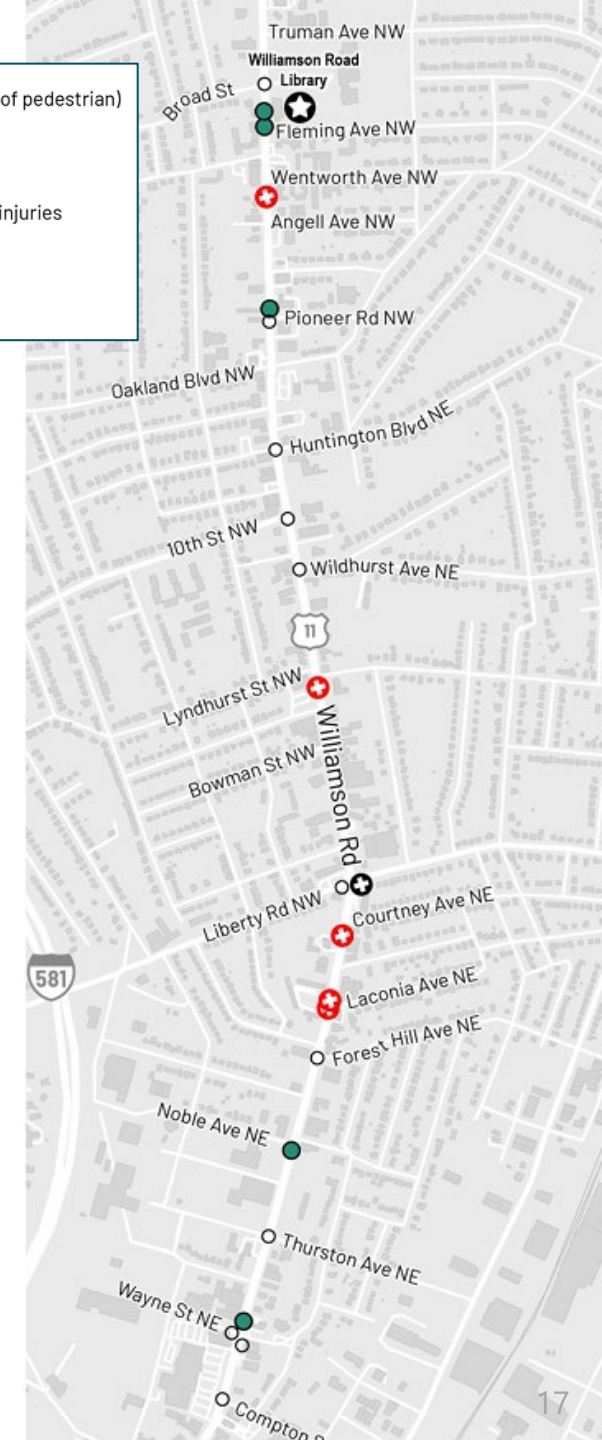
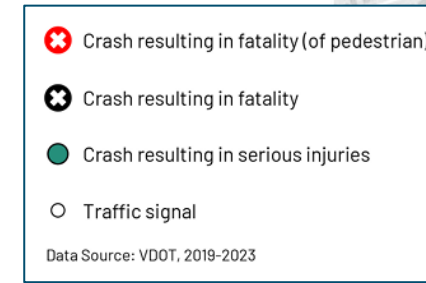
Community  
Safety

**Multiple access points and unrestricted movements create multiple potential crash points.**

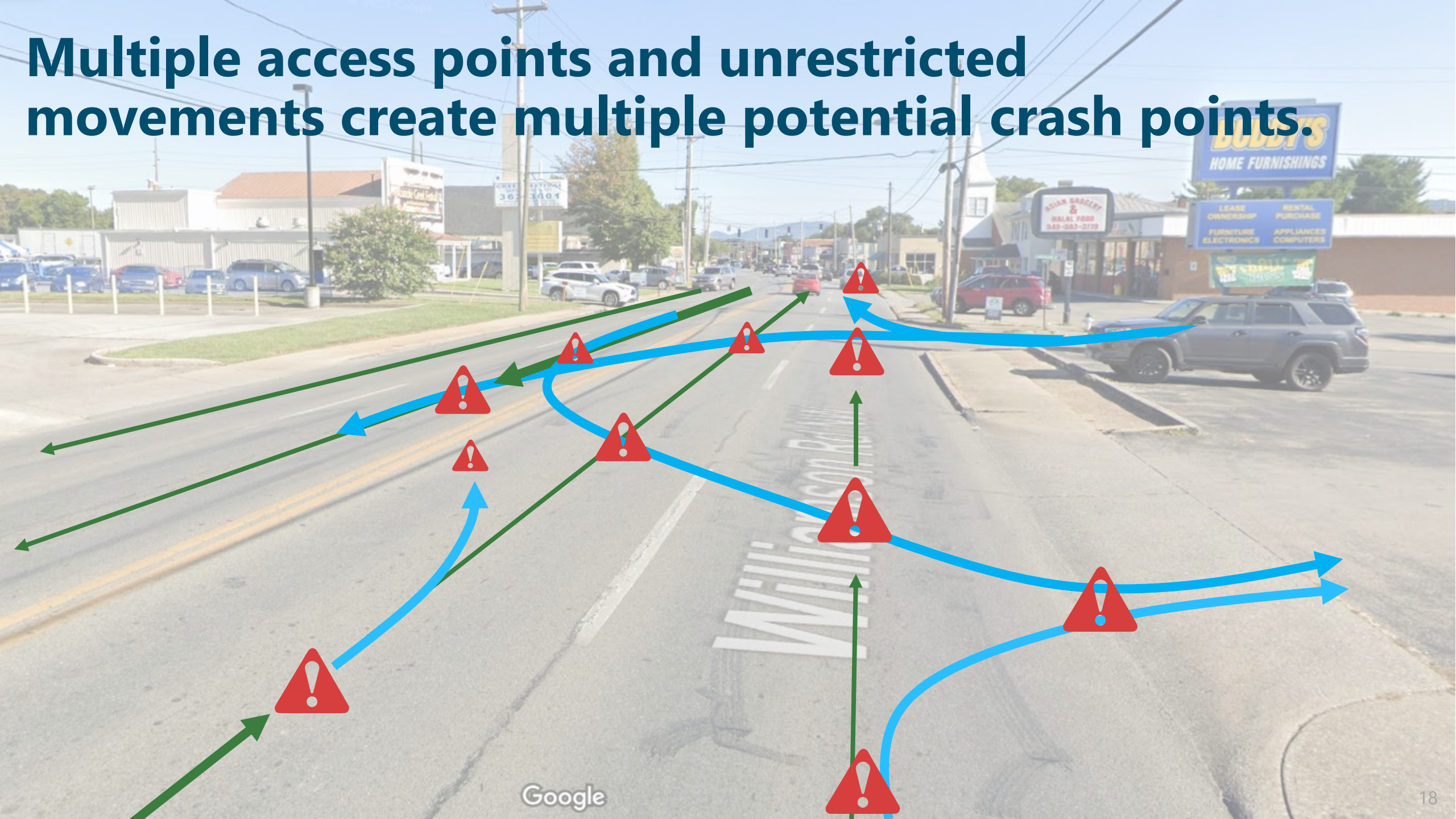


# Williamson Road is a top high injury network in the City

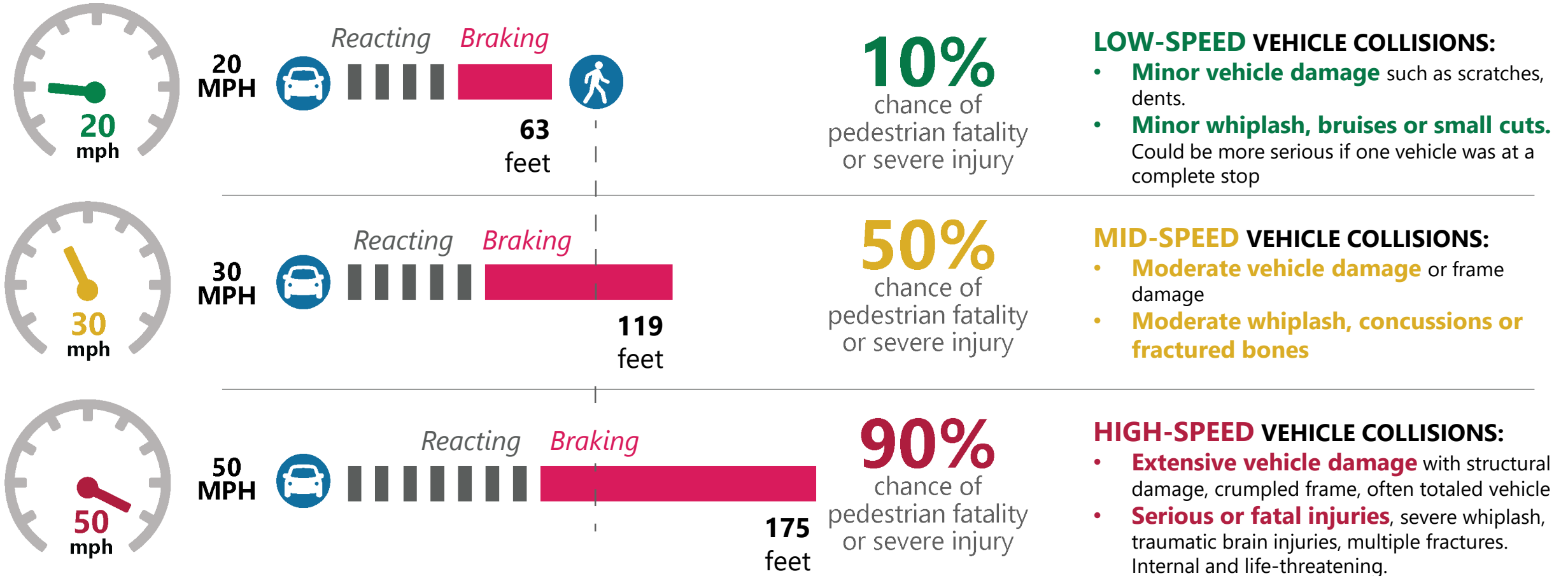
- As a four lane, mostly undivided roadway, Williamson Road is road type prone to crashes.
- Of the crash types that occurred on Williamson Road between 2020 and 2023:
  - 46% were angle collisions (angle between 90 and 180 degrees)
  - 24% were rear end collisions
  - 12% were fixed object/off road collisions
  - 9% were sideswipe-same direction collisions (vehicles going same direction)



# Multiple access points and unrestricted movements create multiple potential crash points.



# Speeding contributes to traffic deaths, injuries, and property & vehicle damage.



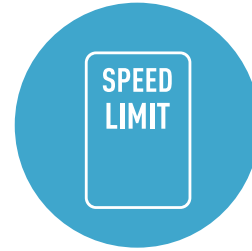
***How do we approach  
resolving safety on  
Williamson Road?***

*Safety Countermeasures*

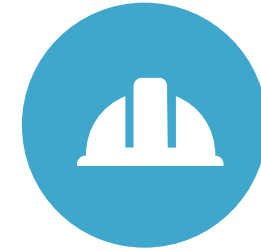
# The Three E's Approach to Traffic Safety



**Education**



**Enforcement**



**Engineering**

# Current Approach: Safe Systems



***What engineering tools are available to resolve safety on Williamson Road?***

# Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)

## - 28 Proven Safety Countermeasures

**MAKING OUR  
ROADS SAFER** | One  
Countermeasure  
at a Time



Roadway Area Type

Urban  
Suburban  
Rural

Roadway Classification

Freeway  
Highway  
Arterial  
Collector  
Local

Focus Area

Speed Management  
Pedestrian/Bicyclist  
Roadway Departure  
Intersections  
Crosscutting

Average Annual Daily Traffic  
Vehicular Volume

Low (< 2,000)  
Medium (2,000-15,000)  
High (> 15,000)

Problem(s) to be Addressed

Inadequate Visibility, Cons  
Excessive Vehicular Conflic  
Congestion  
Excessive Speeds  
Non-Compliance (yielding  
No Separation of Users  
Vulnerable Users not Cons  
Driver Inattention (distract

Crash Type(s) Being Targeted

Angle  
Left-Turn  
Right-Turn  
Rear End  
Pedestrian/Bicyclist  
Head On  
Run-Off-Road/Single Vehicle  
Sideswipe, same direction

<https://highways.dot.gov/safety/proven-safety-countermeasures/search>

# Potential Williamson Road Countermeasures

## SAFER PEOPLE



[Crosswalk Visibility Enhancements](#)



[Leading Pedestrian Interval](#)



[Pedestrian Hybrid Beacons](#)



[Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons \(RRFB\)](#)

## SAFER ROADS



[Medians and Pedestrian Refuge Islands in Urban and Suburban Areas](#)



[Center Turn Lane](#)



[Walkways](#)



[Bicycle Lanes](#)



[Dedicated Left- and Right-Turn Lanes at Intersections](#)



[Roundabouts](#)



[Corridor Access Management](#)

## SAFER SPEEDS



[Appropriate Speed Limits for All Road Users](#)



[Speed Safety Cameras](#)



[Variable Speed Limits](#)

# Safer People



[Pedestrian Hybrid Beacons](#)



[Crosswalk Visibility Enhancements](#)

## Marked Crosswalks



**55% reduction** in pedestrian crashes.

**29% reduction** in total crashes.

## Pedestrian Level Lighting



High visibility crosswalks can reduce pedestrian injury crashes **up to 40%**

Intersection lighting can reduce pedestrian crashes **up to 42%**

## Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon



# Safer People



[Leading Pedestrian Interval](#)



[Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons \(RRFB\)](#)

## Leading Pedestrian Interval



Leading pedestrian intervals reduce interaction between drivers and pedestrians. **Up to 13% reduction in crashes**

## Rapid Rectangular Flashing Beacon



RRFBs can **reduce crashes by 46%**



## HOW TO USE AN RRFB

(Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon)

### Pedestrians and Bicyclists

Press the button to activate the RRFB signals; the lights will begin to flash indicating to motorists a pedestrian is ready to cross.

#### Pedestrians

1. Make eye contact with motorists to be sure traffic is yielding before entering the crosswalk.
2. Walk defensively, scanning both directions to be sure motorists see you.
3. Always scan the road while crossing making sure vehicles in all lanes have stopped.

#### Bicyclists

1. Obey all traffic signs and signals.
2. When using the crosswalk, follow the same rules as pedestrians.
3. When using the travel lane, ride in the direction of traffic and always yield to pedestrians.

# Safer Roads



Walkways



Medians and  
Pedestrian Refuge  
Islands in Urban and  
Suburban Areas

## Sidewalks



Sidewalks can **reduce crashes involving pedestrians by 65-89%**

## Medians & Pedestrian Refuge Islands



Pedestrian refuge islands can **reduce crashes by 56%**

## Curb Extensions



# Safer Roads



[Walkways](#)



[Medians and Pedestrian Refuge Islands in Urban and Suburban Areas](#)

## Reduced Turning Radii

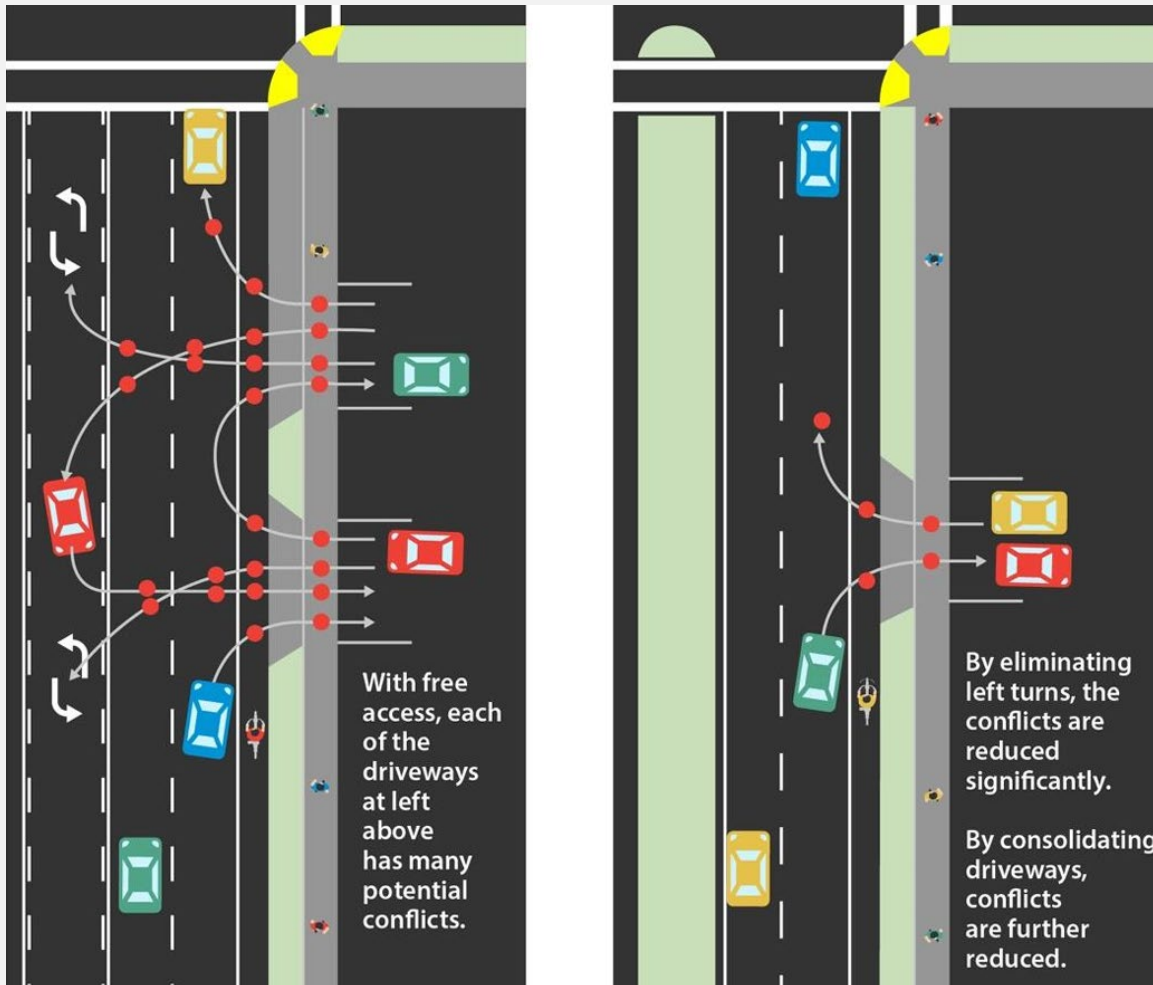


## Turn Wedge



# Safer Roads

## Driveway Consolidation



**25-31% reduction** in fatal and injury crashes along urban/suburban arterials

# Safer Roads

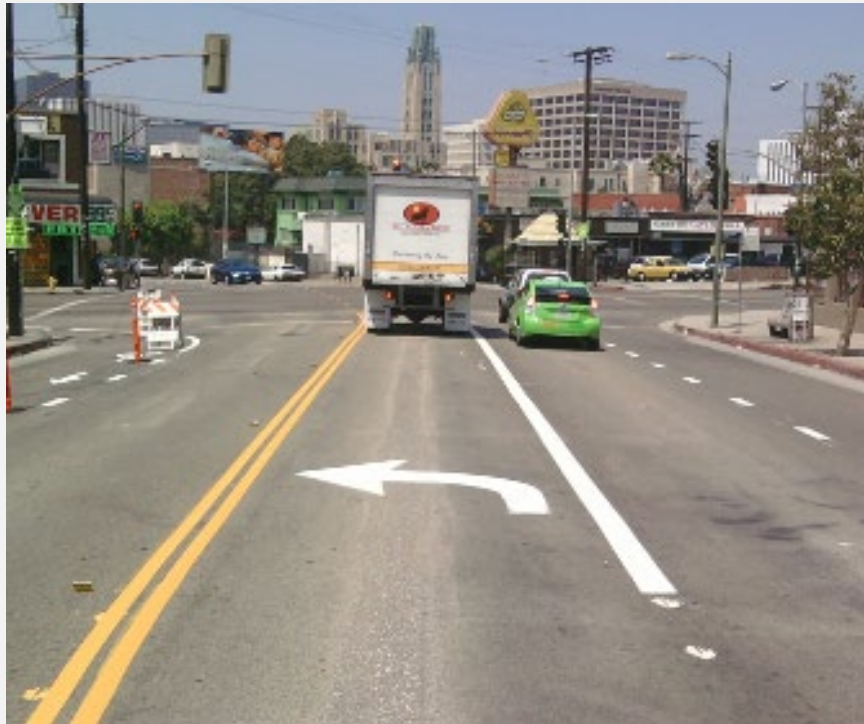


Dedicated Left- and Right-Turn Lanes at Intersections



Roundabouts

## Dedicated Left-turn Lane



**28 - 48% REDUCTION**  
in total crashes

## Traffic Circles / Roundabouts



**78% REDUCTION**  
in FSI crashes

# Safer Roads



Center Turn Lane

## Two-way Left-Turn Lane



Williamson Road, Roanoke County

## Lane Repurposing / Center Turn Lane



**19 - 47% REDUCTION**  
in total crashes

# Safer Roads

**Center Turn Lane with Bike Lane**



**Center Turn Lane with Bike Lane & Bus Stop Pull-off**



**30-49% crash reduction**  
in total crashes on collectors or local roads

# Safer Speeds



[Appropriate Speed Limits for All Road Users](#)

## Appropriate Speed Limits



# Safer Speeds



[Speed Safety Cameras](#)



[Variable Speed Limits](#)

## Variable Speed Limits



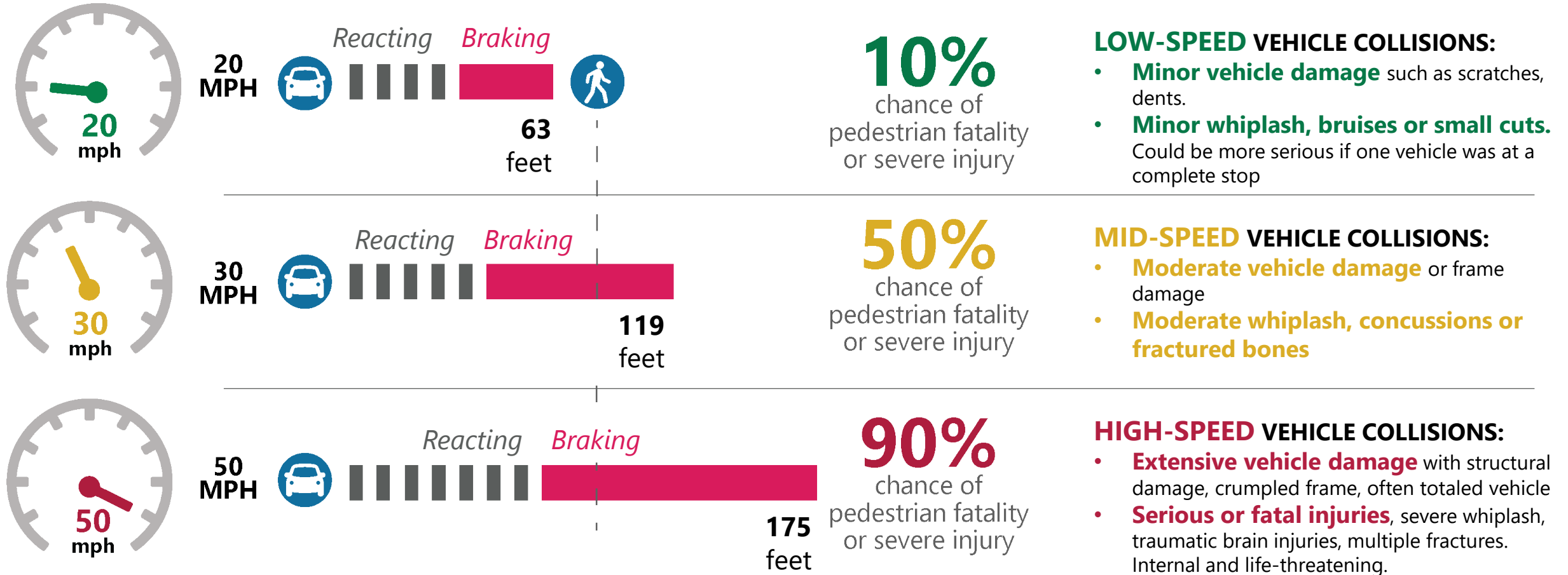
## Speed Cameras\*



*Speed cameras are only legal in school zones, work zones, and construction areas*

Variable speed limits can result in a **65% REDUCTION** in rear-end crashes

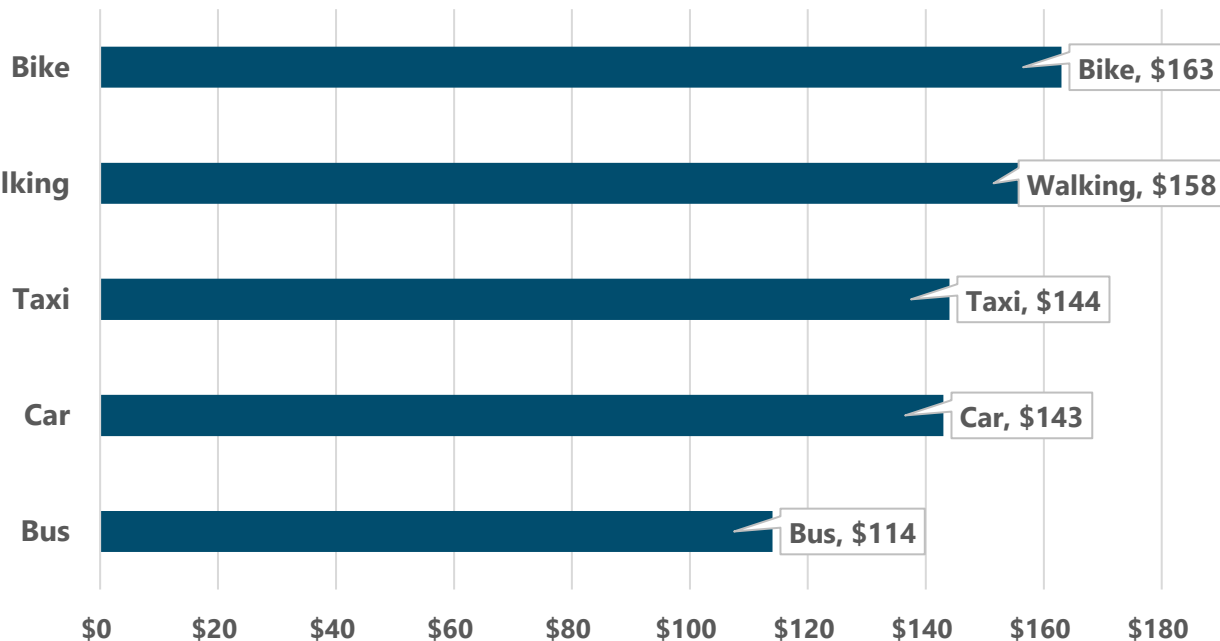
# Speeding contributes to traffic deaths, injuries, and property & vehicle damage.



# Safer roads, slower speeds, and economics

## TRAVEL AND SPENDING PATTERNS FOLLOWING A LANE REPURPOSING

Average Per Capita Spending by Transportation Mode



East Village, NY  
Source: CityLab

## COMPLETE STREETS RIPPLE EFFECTS

A study of 26 complete streets projects found:



**44,000**  
NEW JOBS



**\$2.6 billion**  
NEW WAGES



**16,000**  
NEW HOUSEHOLDS,  
including 2,000 owner and  
14,000 renter households



**\$6 billion**  
NEW DEVELOPMENT,  
leveraged from  
\$600 million invested

Source: Arthur C. Nelson and Richard Hibberd  
<https://www.planning.org/planning/2024/aug/complete-streets-drive-housing-jobs-and-retail-gains/>

# Next Steps

## Create a Vision

- Gather **feedback from the community** on their current experiences and desired future for Williamson Road
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## Select Options

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February–June 2025

# Thank you!

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