

# EQUITY & The SAFE SYSTEM APPROACH

Zero is our goal. A Safe System is how we get there.



U.S. Department of Transportation  
**Federal Highway Administration**

**ZERO**  **IS OUR GOAL**  
A SAFE SYSTEM IS HOW WE GET THERE

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## NOTE TO PRESENTERS

This presentation was developed for FHWA staff to provide information on considerations to Integrate Equity into the Safe System Approach (SSA). Future updates will include how Equity integrates into all elements of SSA.

Others are welcome to use it in whole or in part as appropriate to their purposes.

Thank you.

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**IMAGINE OUR COUNTRY AS A PLACE WHERE  
*NOBODY* HAS TO DIE FROM VEHICLE CRASHES.**



Source: Fehr & Peers



# PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

**1**

**US DOT  
Equity  
Action Plan**

**2**

**Equity in the  
Safe System  
Approach**

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**Equity in the  
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**Conclusion  
& Resources**

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Equity in US  
DOT and  
FHWA

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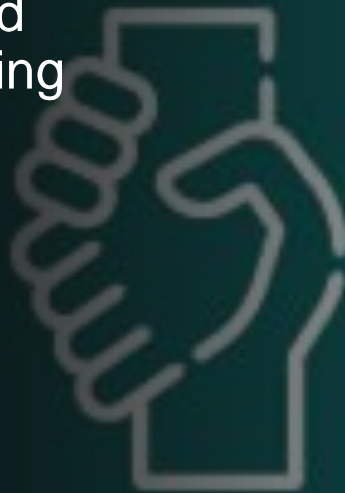
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# EQUITY

The consistent and systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to **underserved communities** that have been denied such treatment (EO 13985)



Black, Latino, Indigenous, Native American, Asian, Pacific Islanders, and other persons of color (BIPOC)

Members of religious minorities

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons

Persons with disabilities

Persons who live in rural areas

Persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality

## **UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES**

Populations sharing a particular characteristic, as well as geographic communities, that have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life. (EO 13985)



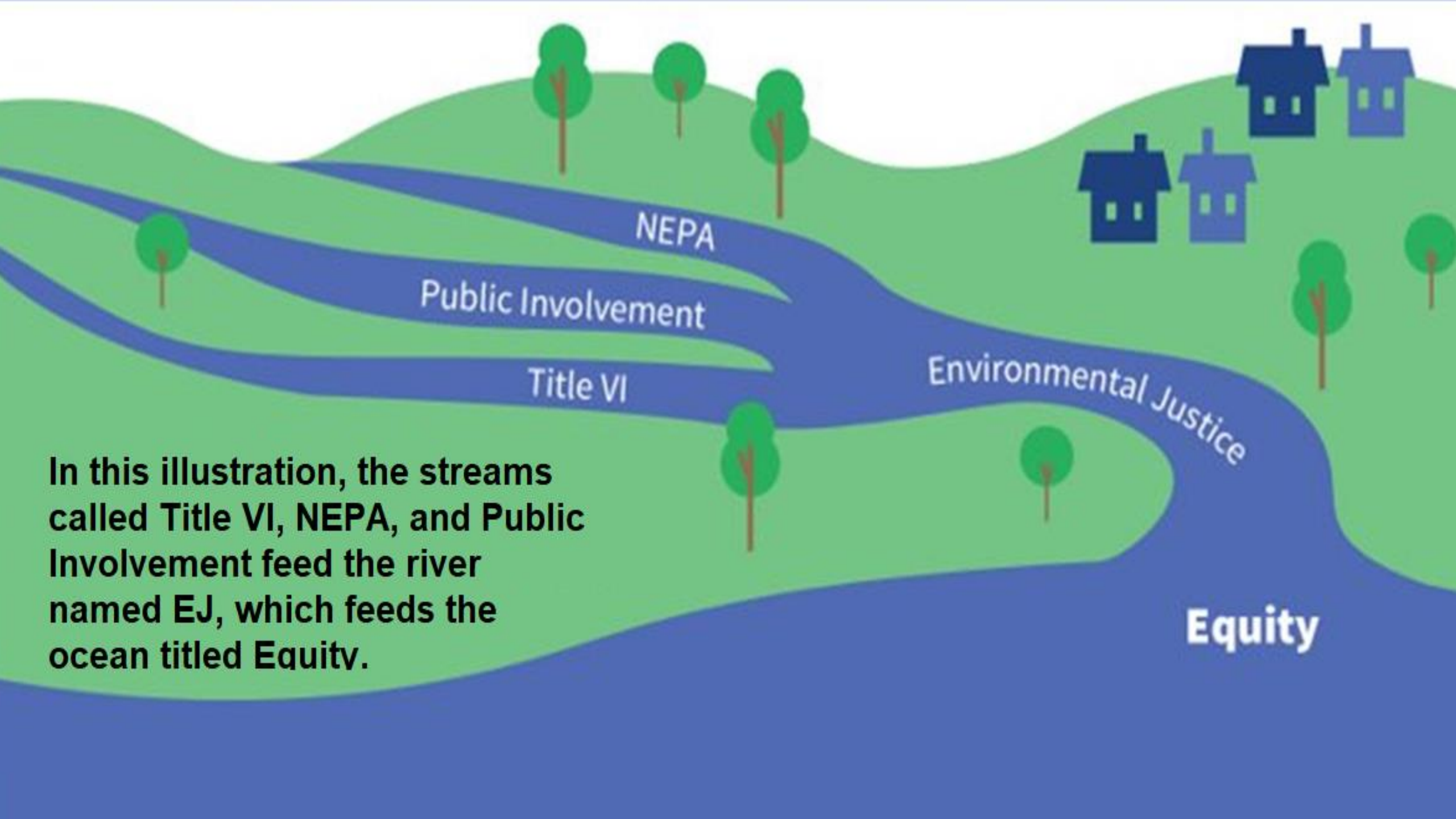
# Equality



# Equity



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In this illustration, the streams called **Title VI**, **NEPA**, and **Public Involvement** feed the river named **EJ**, which feeds the ocean titled **Equity**.

# WEALTH CREATION

- Disadvantaged Business Enterprises





# POWER OF COMMUNITY

- Promising Practices for Meaningful Public Involvement in Transportation Decision-Making
- Transportation Disadvantage Community





# INTERVENTIONS

- Thriving Communities Program
- Justice40

# EXPANDING ACCESS

- Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program
- Safe Streets and Roads for All



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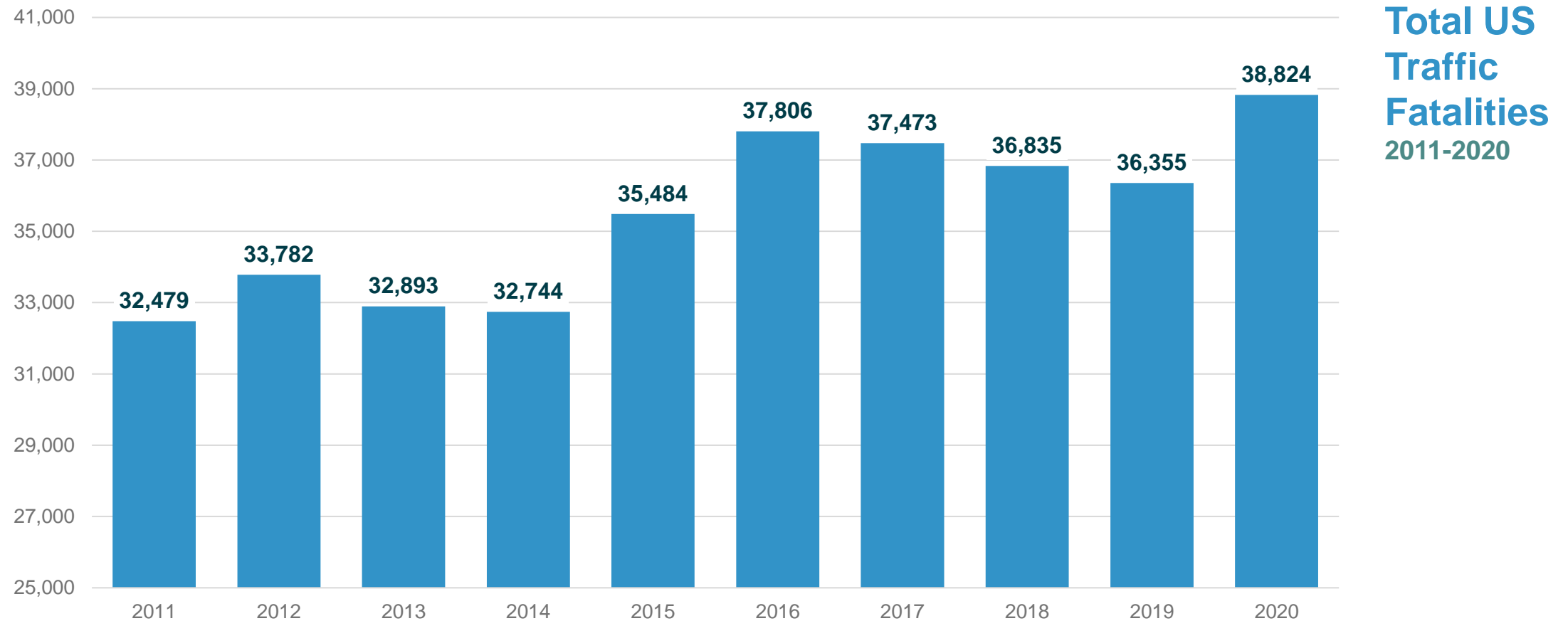
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# TOP TAKEAWAYS

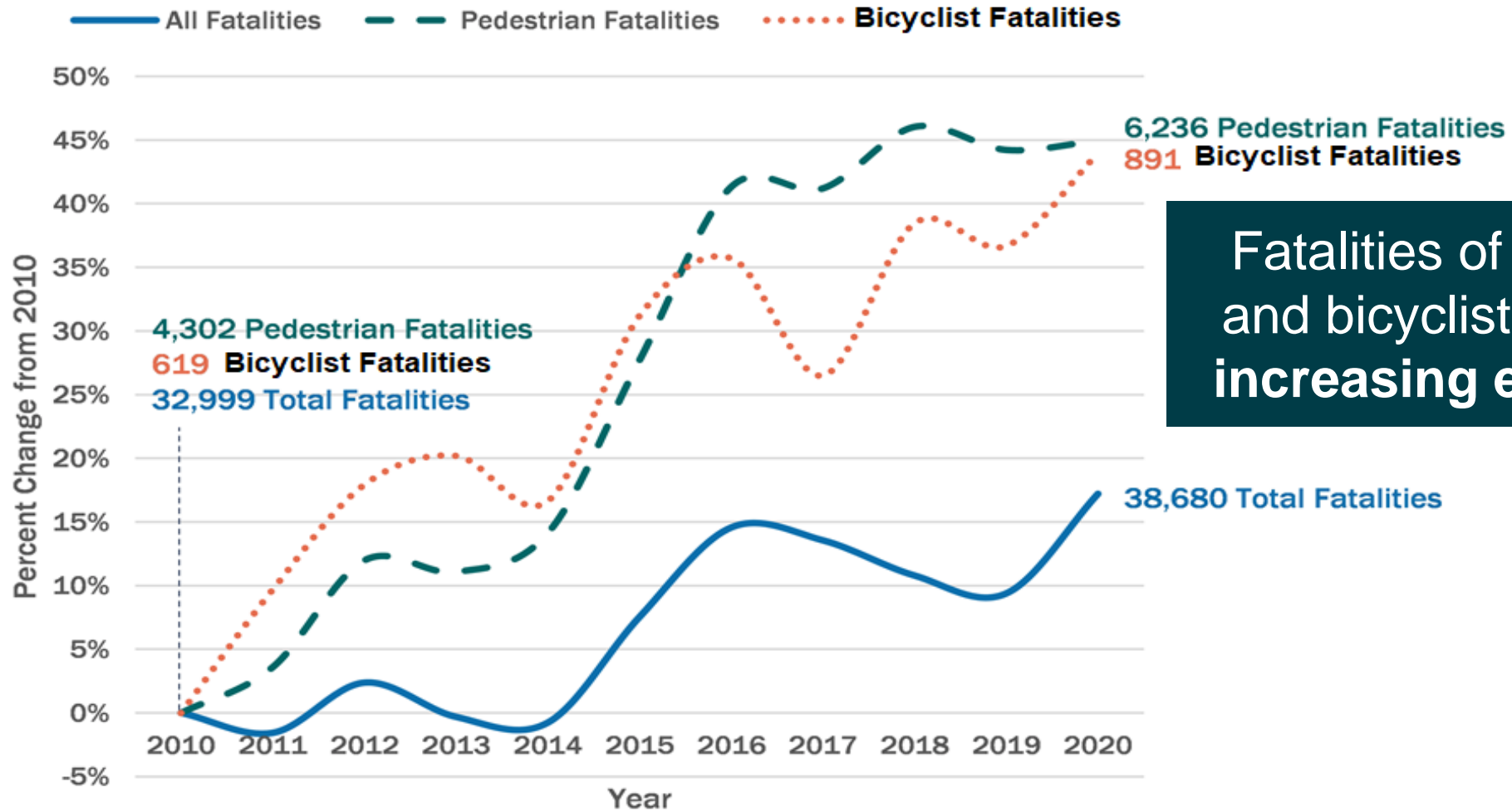
- Reaching zero deaths requires eliminating disparities by prioritizing equity
- Achieving an equitable Safe System requires all principles and elements to integrate equity



# THOUSANDS OF LIVES ARE LOST EACH YEAR



# WE HAVE A NATIONAL ROADWAY SAFETY PROBLEM

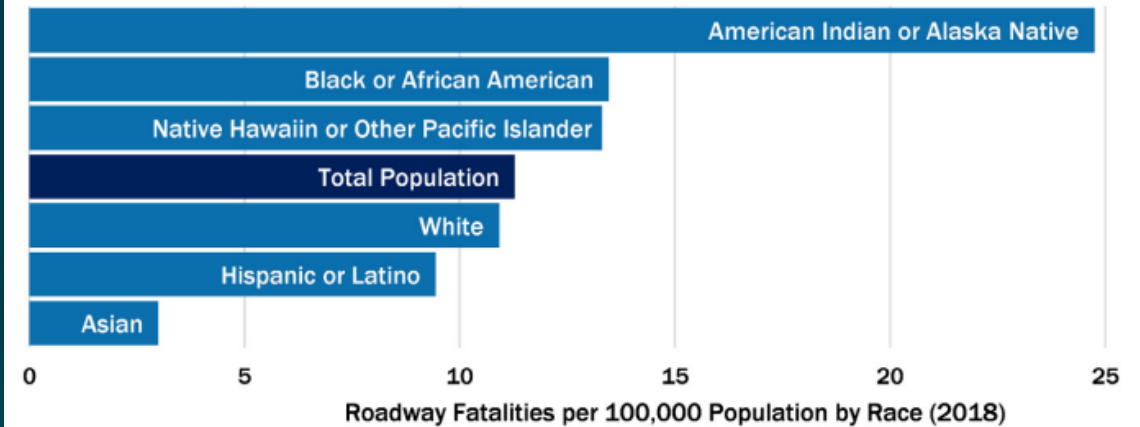


Fatalities of pedestrians and bicyclists have been **increasing even greater**

## DISPARITIES

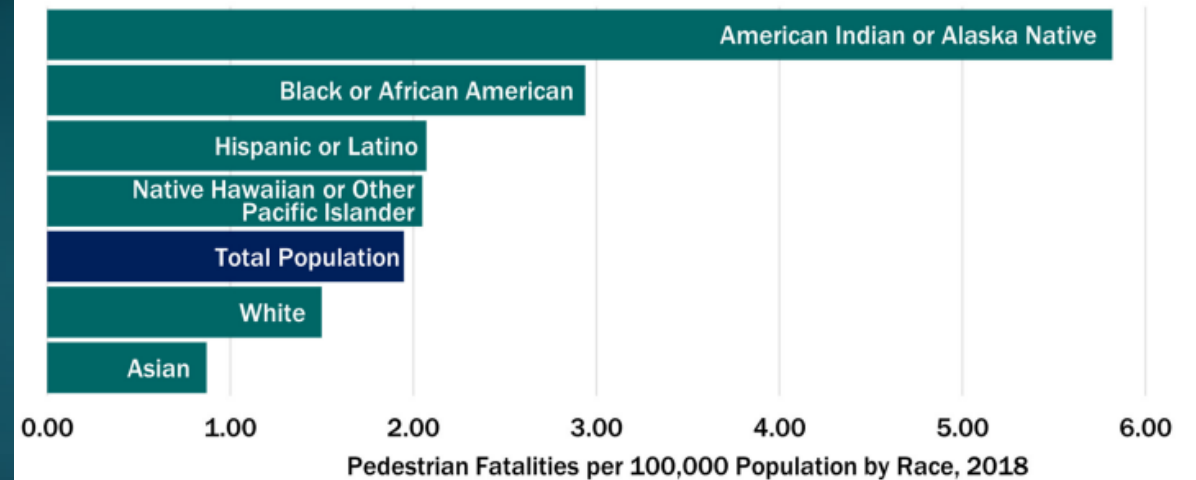
*“Traffic crashes are a leading cause of death for teenagers in America, and disproportionately impact people who are Black, American Indian, and live in rural communities. We face a crisis on our roadways; it is both unacceptable and solvable.”*

### Fatalities impact communities differently...

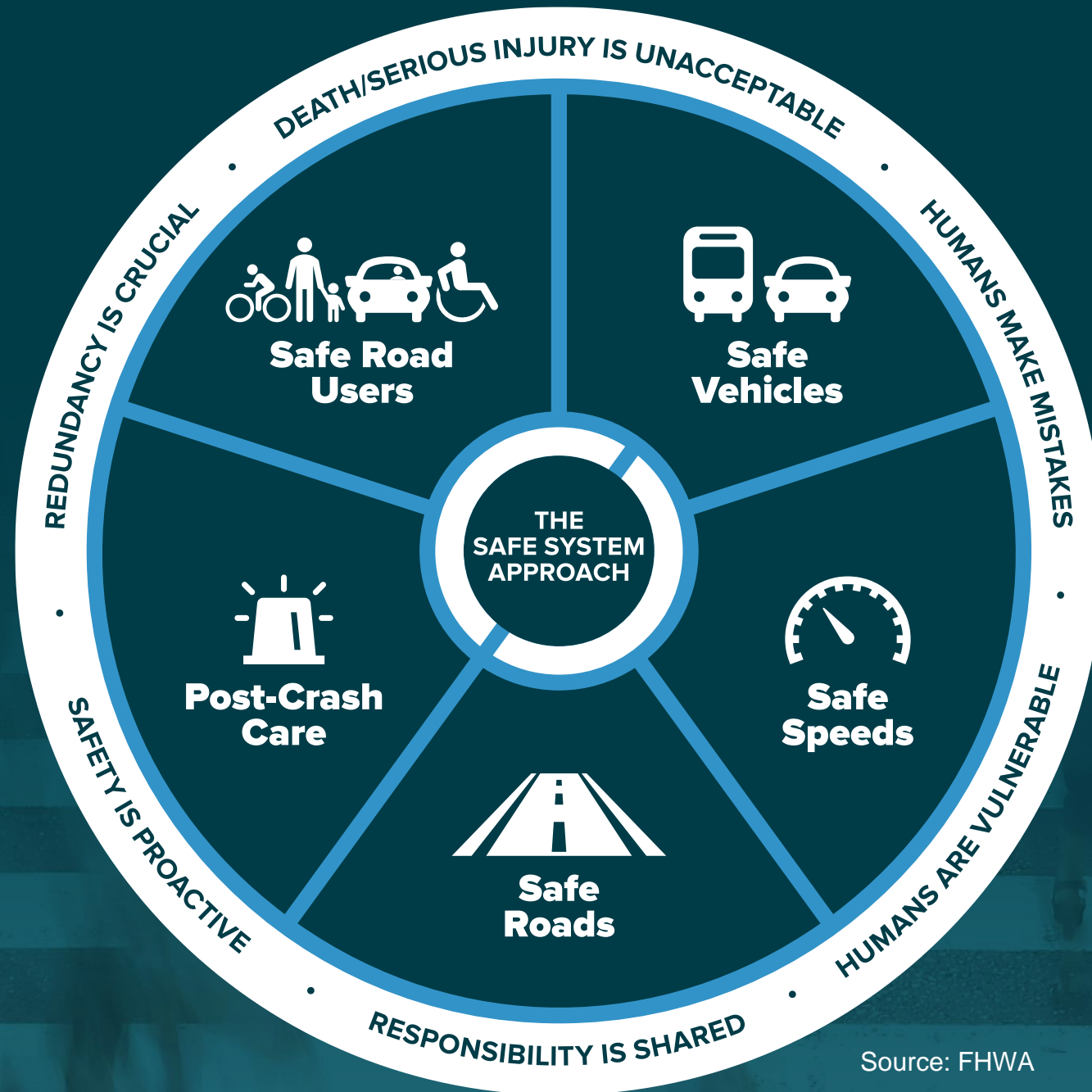


...particularly for people not in a vehicle.

### Fatalities Among Pedestrians



# THE SAFE SYSTEM APPROACH



Source: FHWA



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# THE 6 SAFE SYSTEM PRINCIPLES



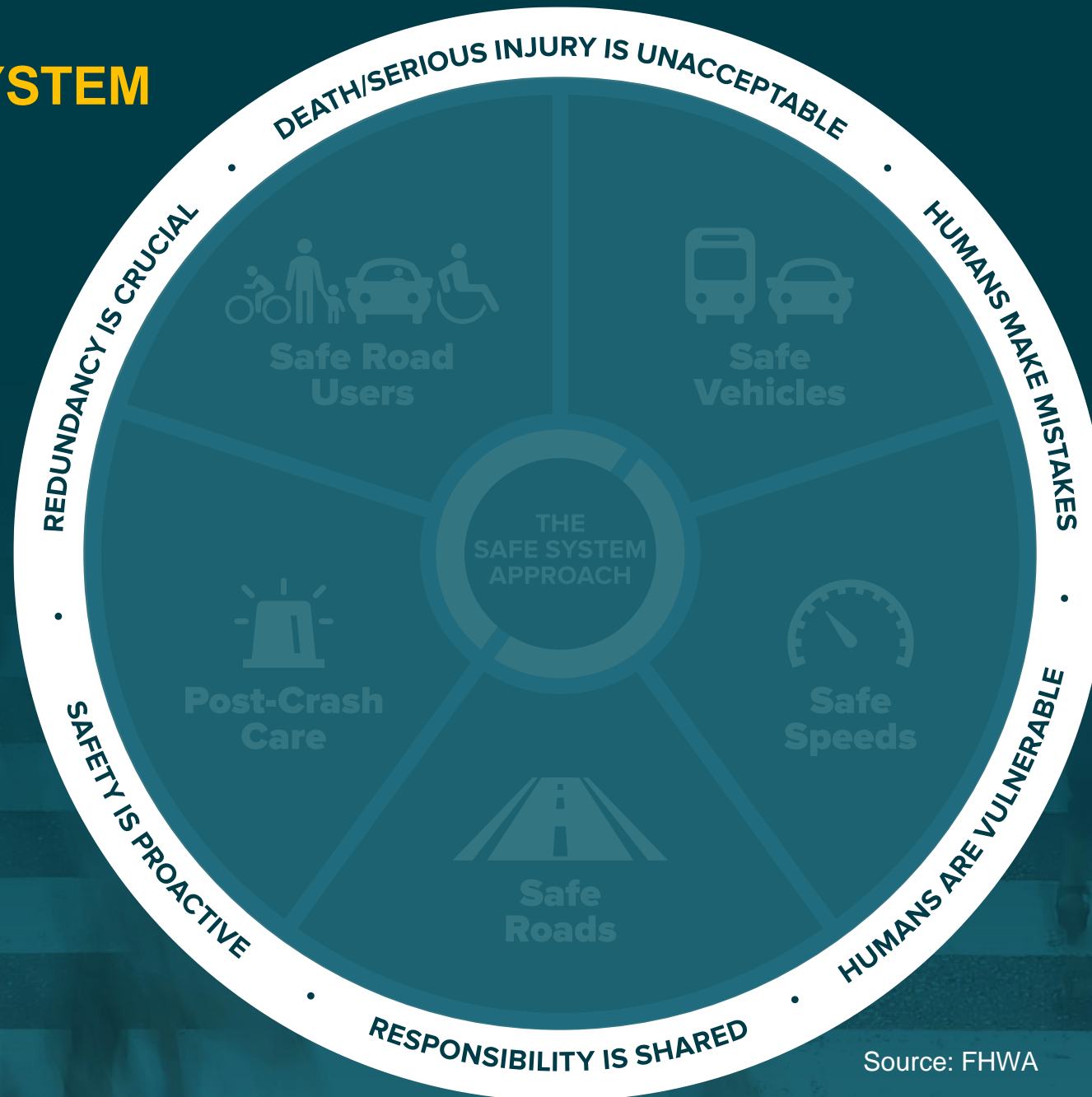
Death/serious injury is unacceptable



Humans make mistakes



Humans are vulnerable



Responsibility is shared



Safety is proactive



Redundancy is crucial

Source: FHWA



# DEATH/SERIOUS INJURY IS UNACCEPTABLE



Source: Vision Zero Network

# Equality



# Equity



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Source: FHWA

**We will make more rapid progress toward the goal of zero deaths by addressing disparate traffic safety outcomes in underserved communities.**

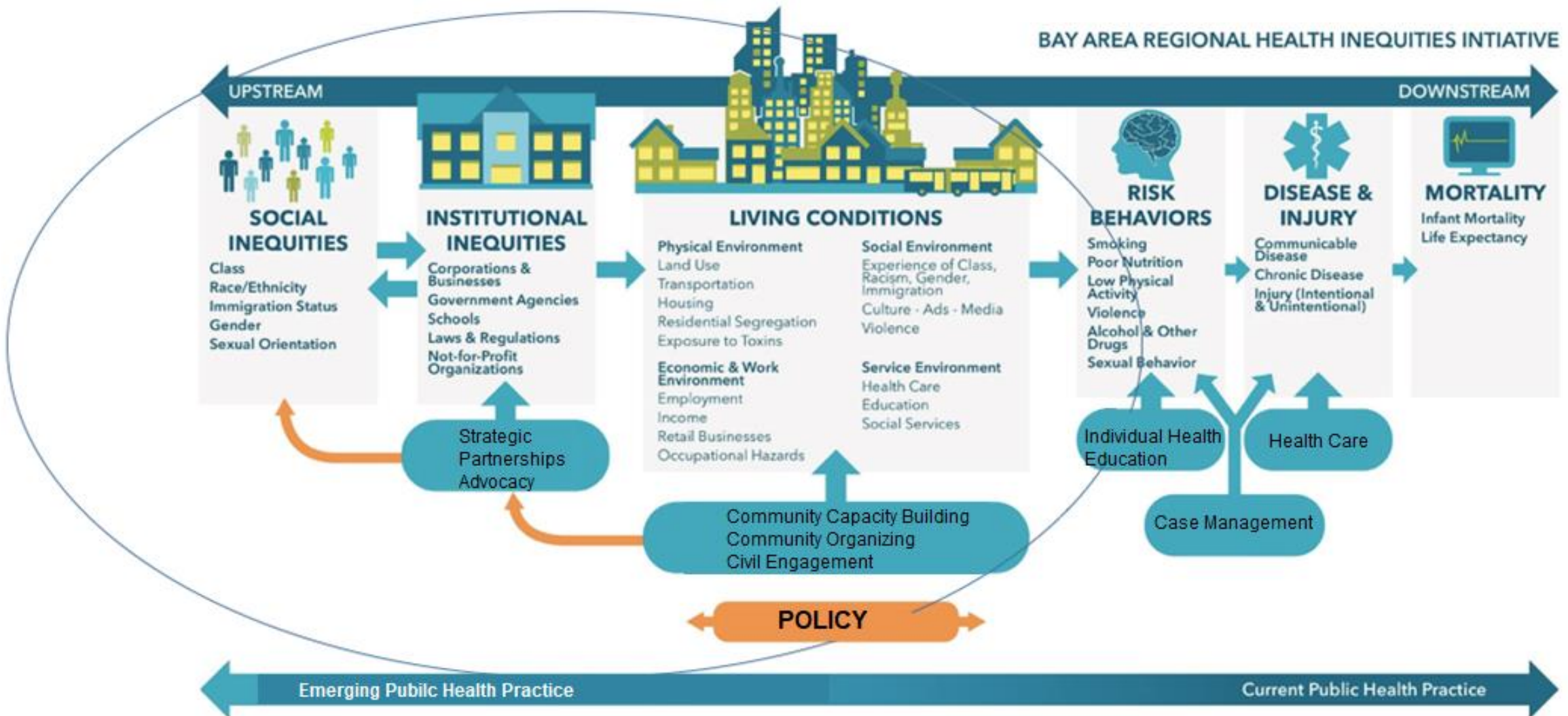


# HUMANS MAKE MISTAKES.

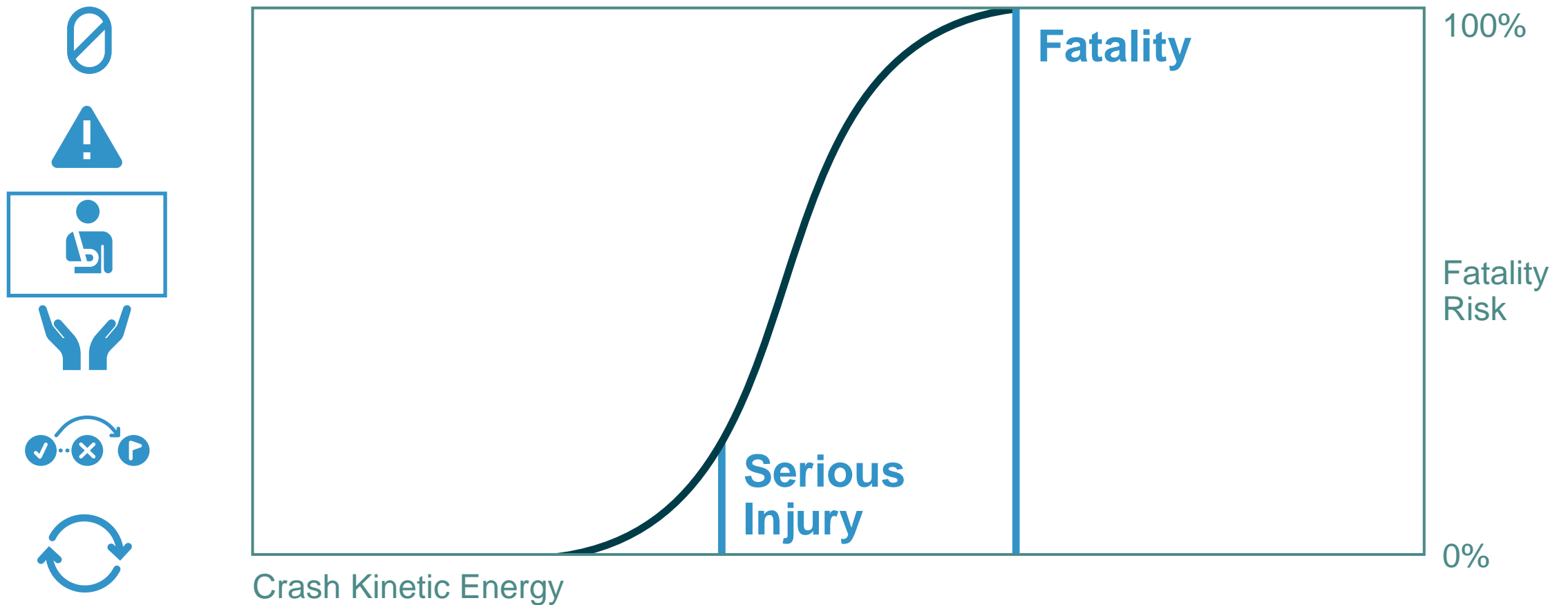


Source: Fehr & Peers

# A PUBLIC HEALTH FRAMEWORK FOR REDUCING HEALTH INEQUITIES



# HUMANS ARE VULNERABLE





## HUMANS ARE VULNERABLE PART 2



# RESPONSIBILITY IS SHARED



- **System managers**

- Planners, designers, builders, operators, maintenance workers

- **Vehicle manufacturers**

- **Enforcement personnel**

- **Traffic Incident Management personnel**

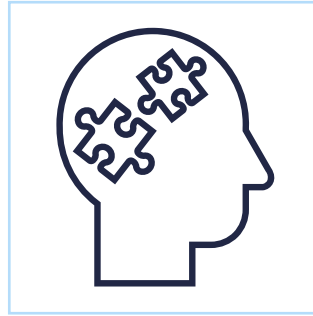
- **Everyone**



# ENGAGEMENT AND COLLABORATION ARE CRITICAL



Engage in meaningful  
public involvement



Coordinate with community  
members and experts  
outside of transportation  
(public health, housing,  
education)



Train, hire, retain, and  
promote individuals from  
underserved communities

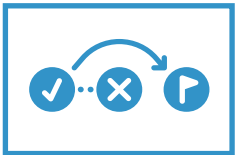
# MEANINGFUL PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IS A PART OF SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

## Features of meaningful public involvement



USDOT defines meaningful public involvement as a process that proactively seeks full representation from the community, considers public comments and feedback, and incorporates that feedback into a project, program, or plan when possible. The impact of community contributions **encourages early and continuous public involvement and brings diverse viewpoints and values into the transportation decision-making process.**

# SAFETY IS PROACTIVE

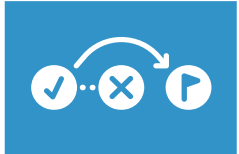


**Identify risks**

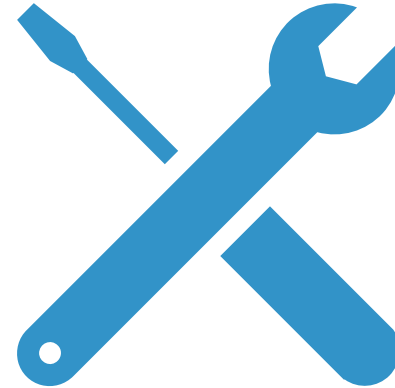


**Mitigate risks**

# EQUITY IS PROACTIVE



**Identify risks  
based on equity  
screening**



**Mitigate risks for  
underserved  
communities**

# REDUNDANCY IS CRUCIAL



**Safe road  
users**



**Safe  
vehicles**



**Safe  
speeds**



**Safe  
roads**

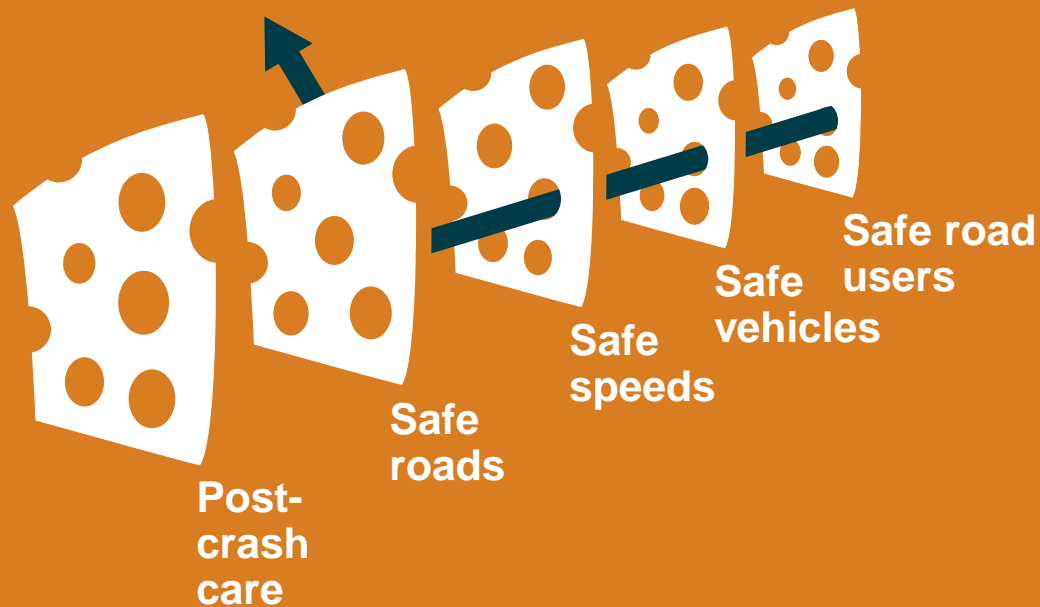


**Post-crash  
care**

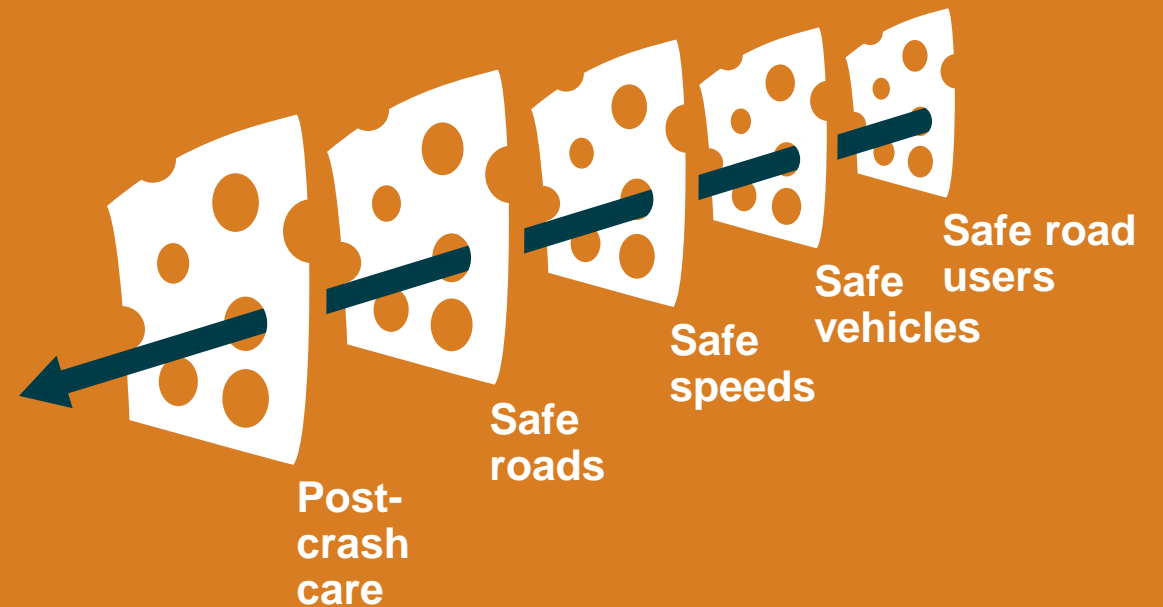


# THE 5 SAFE SYSTEM ELEMENTS CREATE REDUNDANCY

The “Swiss Cheese Model” of redundancy creates layers of protection



Death and serious injuries only happen when all layers fail



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# THE 5 SAFE SYSTEM ELEMENTS



Source: FHWA

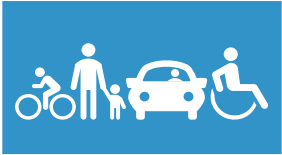
# SAFE ROADS FOR USERS OF ALL AGES AND ABILITIES



Safe roads are designed and operated to:

1. Prevent crashes among all users
2. Keep impacts on the human body at tolerable levels
3. **Serve road users of all ages and abilities, including pedestrians, bicyclists, public transportation users, children, older individuals, individuals with disabilities, motorists, and freight operators.**

# PEOPLE FIRST



**Pedestrians**



**Bicyclists**



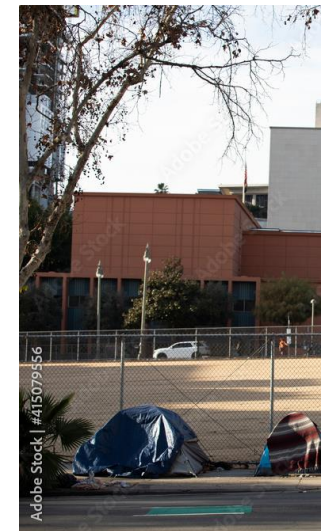
**Drivers and  
Passengers**



**Transit Users**



**People using  
assistive  
mobility  
technologies**



**People  
experiencing  
homelessness**



# UNIVERSAL DESIGN



The design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability or disability.

The seven principles of universal design are as follows:

01

Equitable  
Use

02

Flexibility  
in Use

03

Simple  
and  
Intuitive  
Use

04

Perceptible  
Information

05

Tolerance  
for Error

06

Low  
Physical  
Effort

07

Size and  
Space for  
Approach  
and Use

# EQUITABLE FUNDING PROCESS



1

Prioritize equity factors in funding formulas and project prioritization

2

Assess how certain criteria may unintentionally exclude underserved communities and widen disparities

3

Provide additional resources, including capacity building and safety study funding, to underserved communities

4

Engage in meaningful public involvement

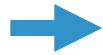
# ASSET MANAGEMENT



# WHERE ARE YOU ON THE EQUITABLE SAFE SYSTEM JOURNEY?

## Traditional Approach

Prevent crashes



Improve human behavior



Control speeding



Individuals are responsible



React based on crash history



## Safe System Approach

Prevent death and serious Injuries



Design for human mistakes/limitations



Reduce systemic kinetic energy



Share responsibility



Proactively identify and address risks



## Equitable Safe System Approach

Prioritize redressing disparities in death and serious injuries

Address upstream factors and do not victim blame

Create livable communities

Institutions can take on more responsibility because they have greater influence

Use equity indicators and meaningful public involvement to proactively identify and redress risk



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# US DOT RESOURCES



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## Equity

Find more resources at:

<https://www.transportation.gov/priorities/equity>



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### Safe System Materials

Find more resources at: [safety.fhwa.dot.gov/zerodeaths](https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/zerodeaths)

**Zero is our goal.  
A Safe System is how we get there.**

**Questions?**