

National Transportation Safety Board,

Washington State is in the midst of a Pedestrian Safety Crisis, with over 500 people who have died on our streets this year. The Redmond City Council recently passed a Vision Zero resolution to address the safety crisis on our streets. This is work that cannot be done in a vacuum, it requires collaboration and approaching the crisis from a variety of issues. From our position as councilmembers we have the power to prioritize funding and building safer street projects that prioritize safety for all users. However, there are issues outside our control, which is why we are reaching out to you today.

Analysis of industry data shows that the hood height of passenger trucks has increased by an average of at least 11 percent since 2000 and that new pickups grew 24 percent heavier on average from 2000 to 2018. Larger vehicles and heavier vehicles mean longer breaking times and greater blind spots. On some heavy-duty trucks, such as the Ford F-250, the front edge of the hood is now 55 inches or more off the ground—as tall as the roof of many sedans. Data shows that large vehicle drivers have poor front sight lines, creating a blind spot that can hide a pedestrian or smaller car right in front of them.

More than 42,000 people were killed and 4.8 million seriously injured on U.S. roadways on 2020, an 8 percent increase from the year before, despite a decrease in miles traveled. Pedestrian fatalities rose 46 percent over the past decade, according to the Governors Highway Safety Association, and the deaths reflect societal inequities. Low-income people are more likely to be struck; elderly pedestrians and wheelchair users are at higher risk of mortality when hit by a vehicle; and Black, Hispanic, and Indigenous people are overrepresented in pedestrian crash fatalities.

We understand that the reasons for the rising death toll are complex, with many variables. But a growing body of research indicates that the increasing dimensions of pickups is a leading contributor to the deadliness of crashes, especially when for children who are less likely to be visible, pedestrians, cyclists, or smaller vehicles.

These trends are alarming and we ask that you require automakers to prioritize the safety of people outside these large vehicles by requiring automatic

emergency braking with pedestrian detection and blind spot warning be standard on all new vehicles. These are not luxury add-ons. They are life saving technologies and must be required on all large vehicles.