

**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION TESTIMONY FOR  
HEARING BEFORE THE  
CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION  
October 7, 2015**

Good morning Chairman Rodriguez and members of the Transportation Committee. I am Polly Trottenberg, the Commissioner of the New York City Department of Transportation (DOT). Today I am joined by Ryan Russo, DOT's Deputy Commissioner for Transportation Planning and Management, and Jeff Lynch, DOT's Assistant Commissioner of Intergovernmental and Community Affairs. Also joining us is Keith Kerman, Deputy Commissioner for Fleet Management at DCAS.

I am glad to be here today to discuss the City's progress on Mayor Bill de Blasio's Vision Zero initiative to eliminate traffic deaths and serious injuries. As we close in on our second year of Vision Zero, it is clear that our combined efforts have begun to save lives and change the safety culture on our streets. But we have much more to do. Even one traffic death is one too many.

I first want to thank Speaker Mark-Viverito, Chairman Rodriguez and the City Council for your support and partnership in pursuing Vision Zero. I also want to express the City's deep appreciation to Transportation Alternatives and Families for Safe Streets, whose leadership and forceful advocacy on Vision Zero have been essential to our street safety work.

This has been a great team effort by the de Blasio administration, as members of the Vision Zero Task Force - including the Mayor's Office, DOT, NYPD, DCAS, TLC, DOH, and MTA have been hard at work developing and implementing strategies to keep pedestrians, motorists, cyclists and motorcyclists safe.

So far, we are encouraged by our progress -- in 2014 we recorded the fewest pedestrian fatalities on our streets since the City started keeping records in 1910, and we had one of the safest years overall. And as of today, 2015 has the potential to be even safer.

While it takes over a year to get full data regarding injuries from the State, we do know that in 2014 the NYPD saw an 8 percent decline in pedestrian injuries reported, as compared to 2013. So far this year the numbers are even more encouraging: from January through August 2015, NYPD reports roughly 950 fewer pedestrian injuries as compared to that same period in 2014, a 13 percent decline.

While it is still early and we know progress on Vision Zero may not always be linear, we do believe that many of the key initiatives the City is pursuing are making a difference, particularly stronger NYPD enforcement, our ongoing street projects, the 25 mph speed limit and expanded speed camera enforcement.

I am happy to announce that the City recently achieved an important milestone for our fleet of 27,000 vehicles. It has been more than a full calendar year since a City government vehicle has been involved in a fatal crash. This accomplishment is due in part to DCAS's work to make vehicles safer with new technology, and their efforts to encourage safe driving behavior. I also want to thank the dedicated City employees who have embraced Vision Zero and are driving safer and smarter.

This year, DOT released our five Vision Zero Borough Pedestrian Safety Action Plans. These data-driven plans thoroughly analyzed the unique conditions of each New York City borough and identified characteristics of pedestrian fatalities and severe injuries within that borough.

To develop these plans, we worked with the Council and many of you to host 28 Vision Zero Town Halls and hands-on workshops. We combined that local community input along with over 11,000 responses from our interactive website, with five years of detailed crash data. All of this input shaped our comprehensive work plans which focus DOT and NYPD resources at the most crash-prone locations in each borough.

These priority corridors and intersections disproportionately account for pedestrian fatalities and severe injuries. On average, half of all pedestrians who were killed or seriously injured from 2009-2013 were struck on only 8 percent of each borough's corridors. Further, approximately 1

percent of each borough's intersections account for 15 percent of pedestrian fatalities and serious injuries. Our Borough Plans guide our work, providing the "where" and "how" for our safety engineering improvements, targeted enforcement, and educational campaigns.

Some of these priority streets and intersections are highlighted on the maps behind us, and include many streets we all know throughout the City:

- In the Bronx - Grand Concourse, Fordham Road, Bruckner Boulevard
- In Manhattan - Canal Street, 34th Street, and Broadway
- In Queens - Jamaica Avenue, Queens Boulevard, and Northern Boulevard
- In Brooklyn - Flatbush Avenue, Atlantic Avenue, and Ocean Parkway
- In Staten Island - Richmond Avenue, Hylan Boulevard, and Victory Boulevard

In the eight months since the plans were released, we have completed 26 Vision Zero safety projects - and another 28 are underway.

One exciting project we have just completed, which is on the board behind me, is located at the intersections of Atlantic, Washington and Underhill Avenues in Brooklyn. At this complex intersection, we improved safety by shortening crosswalks, adding new crosswalks, improving turns to reduce conflicts, and banning problematic turns.

On the first segment of our signature Vision Zero Great Streets project on Queens Boulevard, we have constructed pedestrian islands, added bicycle lanes and new pedestrian space, upgraded pedestrian ramps, and made changes to better organize traffic. We are nearing completion of the operational phase of this project, and capital work will commence in FY18.

I am also pleased to announce that we will kick off our efforts to tackle the next segment of Queens Boulevard, from 73rd Street to Eliot Avenue, at a community workshop this fall.

Additionally as part of the borough plans, we have installed nearly 300 Leading Pedestrian Intervals (LPIs). LPIs provide pedestrians with a head-start before turning traffic is released, thereby reducing conflicts. We are currently proactively evaluating every school crosswalk on a

priority corridor and every priority intersection in the City for this treatment. We have also installed 245 speed humps this year, calming traffic on our neighborhood streets.

After successfully passing the speed camera expansion with the support of our Albany partners in 2014, I am proud to report that we completed the installation and activation of all 120 additional speed cameras in time for the first day of school this year. We have focused our 100 fixed speed cameras in school zones around the City with a particular emphasis on high crash locations with high rates of speeding. DOT also deploys an additional 40 mobile units, which can be repositioned daily for maximum effectiveness.

Over the past year, we have found that daily speed camera violations have dropped by an average of 60 percent at fixed camera locations. Also as part of our speed camera program, we have installed 3,800 speed limit signs with the "Photo Enforced" message to remind drivers to watch their speedometer, and that speed cameras may be active in the area.

Under Vision Zero we are also focusing on cycling safety. Well-designed bike lanes not only protect bicyclists, but also reduce excessive speeding, organize traffic flow and protect pedestrians crossing the street. They are a fundamental part of Vision Zero's strategy to increase safety for all roadway users.

New Yorkers today can ride on our 1,010 mile bike network, of which over 380 miles are protected from traffic and nearly another 380 miles are exclusive bike lanes. We are on track to build over 12 miles of protected lanes by the end of 2015, an unprecedented pace. One long-anticipated project that will soon be completed is on the Pulaski Bridge, where we are adding a protected bike lane.

Additionally, our partner agency DCAS has implemented a series of important initiatives as part of Vision Zero. They have trained over 23,000 City staff in a one-day defensive driving and safety course. This course includes screening of a powerful film featuring members of Families for Safe Streets.

DCAS has outfitted nearly 20,000 City government vehicles with tracking devices, known as canceivers, to monitor speeding, hard braking, hard acceleration, and seatbelt use. We will be able to use records from these devices to make our streets even safer.

DCAS is also making advances with new physical improvements to the fleet, such as truck side guards. So far, 160 trucks from 20 agencies have been retrofitted with truck side guards. In addition, consistent with Local Law 56 of 2015, DCAS is now requiring side guards as part of new City truck procurements. I want to thank Council Member Johnson for his leadership on that bill, and thank my colleague Keith Kerman as well.

In closing, I would like to talk about some of the next steps we will be taking in our Vision Zero efforts.

First, I want to announce that in order to reinvigorate our 20 year-old red light camera program, we will be relocating approximately 30 of our 150 cameras to new locations. The red light camera program has been proven effective at deterring red light running. Over the life of the program, the average number of violations issued daily by each camera has dropped by 71 percent, from 31 in 1994 to 9 per day in 2014.

DOT is also at the forefront of exploring new technology to improve safety. Last month, I was honored to stand with USDOT Secretary Anthony Foxx, Chairman Rodriguez, and Council Member Van Bramer, to announce that the City had won a highly competitive \$20 million Federal grant for a Connected Vehicle Pilot Deployment Program.

The program will deploy cutting edge wireless technology in up to 10,000 NYCDOT vehicles, taxis, MTA buses and UPS trucks that will alert drivers to hazards on the road, help pedestrians and cyclists safely cross the street, warn truck drivers of height restrictions and sharp turns ahead, and hopefully significantly reduce crashes. This pilot will enable us to learn how this potentially game changing safety technology can operate successfully on our busy City streets.

We also have many exciting upcoming street safety improvement projects, including a plan for a

protected bike lane on Sixth Avenue between 14th and 33rd Streets in Manhattan which we will be presenting to the community boards this fall. In Queens, we are reengineering sections of Astoria Boulevard to improve safety by shortening crossings, adding new crossings, and normalizing the street's geometry.

As we move forward with Vision Zero, we continue to rely on the Council's support on projects like these throughout the City. You are our partners in all our Vision Zero work – local safety projects, education and enforcement, and legislative efforts here and up in Albany.

And all of us rely upon the dedicated, creative and hard-working team at NYCDOT. I want to thank our borough offices, our traffic engineers, our planners, our safety educators, our legal, policy and government affairs experts and all other DOT staff and leadership who help make the goals of Vision Zero a reality.

Thank you again for inviting me today. I am now happy to answer any questions you may have.



**FOR THE RECORD**

OFFICE OF THE BROOKLYN BOROUGH PRESIDENT

**Testimony of Brooklyn Borough President Eric L. Adams  
New York City Council Committee on Transportation  
October 7, 2015**

Good morning, Chair Rodriguez, and members of the New York City Council's Committee on Transportation. My name is Eric L. Adams, and I am the Brooklyn Borough President, representing the 2.6 million residents that call Brooklyn home. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Int 912 - *A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to requiring curb extensions at certain dangerous intersections.*

I applaud the City Council for advancing this initiative and would like to proffer a model that I recently launched in Brooklyn using my Office's Capital Budget. In 2015, I launched Connecting Residents on Safer Streets, or CROSS Brooklyn. This program supports the creation of curb extensions or bulb-outs at dangerous intersections in Brooklyn. During the program's first year, I allocated one million dollars to fund five dangerous intersections in Brooklyn.

The sites were selected in consultation with the Borough Office of the New York City Department of Transportation. This consultation determined feasibility of implementation, as well as need, by utilizing the DOT's Pedestrian Safety Vision Zero Action Plan for Brooklyn released earlier this year.

As a result, we funded the implementation of curb extensions at:

- Nostrand Avenue and Avenue Z
- Utica Avenue and Church Avenue
- 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue/New Utrecht Avenue/50<sup>th</sup> Street
- Flatbush Avenue/Washington Avenue/Lincoln Road
- Utica Avenue and Winthrop Street

In total, from 2011-2013, there were nearly 650 crashes at these five intersections that lead to at least seven fatalities.

I am an ardent supporter of the Mayor's Vision Zero strategy, of which this legislation seeks to more fully implement. These bulbouts will make drivers more aware of pedestrian crossings, open lines of sight for pedestrians and drivers alike, and encourage drivers to slow down at intersections where pedestrians are present. My efforts were strategic not only in their location at dangerous intersections, but we strove to locate bulbouts in areas with high populations of seniors and young people as a way to support NYCDOT's Safe Routes for Seniors/to School programs. By installing more bulb-outs or neck-downs, seniors and children will benefit because more of their commute will be spent on sidewalks,

especially near dangerous intersections. At the same time, all users of the roadway will benefit from a safer street.

This legislation should follow a similar strategy: coordination with DOT to first locate improvements at high crash locations and around schools and senior centers. In addition, coordinating these improvements with the expansion of slow zones and the further installation of countdown clocks at signalized intersections will go a long way towards making our roadways safer for all who use them.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of Int 912. I hope Brooklyn's CROSS model can be duplicated across New York City to make a safer city for all.



## Debbie Kahn City Council Vision Zero 10/7/2015 Testimony

Thank you Council Member Rodriguez for being such a strong leader and for always working on behalf of traffic justice. You are a Families for Safe Streets Vision Zero Hero.

It will be six painful years this November 4<sup>th</sup> that our only child, Seth Kahn was run over and killed by a man driving a 20 ton bus and speeding through the intersection. We were told by the police at the time that these things happen every day and that it was only an accident, what can you do? No charges were filed, the bus driver was given a ticket two weeks later for failure to yield but the ticket was thrown out of court because the police officer failed to show up in court. The bus driver is now on permanent disability for his stress. My husband and I, well our lives have not been the same, we are broken.

Seth was the very center of our family. He was a joy to be around, always smiling and happy with a quick sense of humor and amazing stories to tell. Creative and talented; he strived for perfection in all that he did. He was always helping others and at work he was promoted quickly. He had many friends that were inspired by him, his work ethic and his creative energy and kind spirit. Everyone always expected great things from him and saw in him the next Jim Henson.

The street corner where Seth was killed at 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 53<sup>rd</sup> Street was looked at by Transportation Alternatives and the Community Board due to so many individuals being injured and killed because of the large amount of traffic and the high volume of pedestrians in that area. They came up with a plan to put bike lanes with green space islands and parking along 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue. This fixed the problem and immediately had an impact on reducing pedestrian and bicycle injuries in this neighborhood. But it shouldn't take a death to redesign an intersection. Thankfully, because of Mayor deBlasio's leadership, we now have Vision Zero and this means prevention must be our guiding principle.

Queens Blvd. which has been a street where countless deaths and injuries have occurred through the years can also become a model for all of the huge streets in our city where death and injury happen every single day. Families for Safe Streets worked tirelessly for this street to be fixed, and now we hope it will be a model for all of the other big, wide dangerous streets in NYC. We must expand the budget for this important work and expand the DOT's ability to do this work faster.

Last year, Families For Safe Streets worked tirelessly as we wept in our grief against all odds to fight to get the speed limit lowered in NYC to 25 mph. But this needs to be enforced! We also pushed for the Right Of Way Law, and these two laws used together are powerful tools that need to be used and need to be enforced.

**I do not want my son's death to be in vain**—please, help us get to Vision Zero. We want the City Council to push the Vision Zero Task Force to produce a clear timeline with agency outcomes for injury and death reduction each year.

I manage the Families For Safe Streets Facebook page and I do not want to have any more conversations with bereft moms, dads, sisters, brothers, sons, daughters, crash victims with PTSD about their crashes in NYC, their physical and emotional pain, their struggle against the system that is NYC and the ignorance around people that do not understand that they could be us in a New York minute. Because all it takes is a second for your entire world to change when that motor vehicle comes crashing down the street at you or your child or mother, hitting you or running you over. Yes, all it takes is a second, and then you know. . . Please, I beg you, for us this is urgent and we cannot wait for more people to die or be injured. We need this now, please – Let's get to VISION ZERO NOW!

**WE ARE WATCHING, THE WORLD IS WATCHING, AND WE--NO -- I CANNOT WAIT.**



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## **Committee on Transportation Oversight Hearing**

**Testimony by Paul Steely White, Executive Director, Transportation Alternatives**  
**Wednesday, October 7th, 2015**

Thank you, Chair Rodriguez and the members of the Committee on Transportation, for convening this hearing.

I am Paul Steely White, Executive Director of Transportation Alternatives. We are a 40-year old non-profit, with a network of more than 150,000 New Yorkers, dedicated to improving the safety of New York City's streets. We led the push for the City to adopt Vision Zero, and today we are tasked with ensuring it remains a strong program and a priority both for this administration and for those who will continue its work in the future.

At the most basic level, Vision Zero is a formal commitment by the City of New York to eliminate traffic deaths and serious injuries by protecting the most vulnerable users of our streets. But the City can only reach that objective with a sustained program of well-enforced laws, evidence-based policies, and broad culture change.

In 2014, we made great strides toward saving lives by establishing the Vision Zero Task Force, lowering the speed limit, expanding automated speed enforcement, and passing the Right of Way Law. Mayor de Blasio built on that progress at the start of this year by announcing the Vision Zero Great Streets Initiative to fix dangerous corridors - and the City Council called for an expansion of that program's budget, as well as the DOT operating budget. Scaling up our street safety improvements is the only way to achieve the ambitious Vision Zero goal by 2024.

In July, Transportation Alternatives released its first Vision Zero Report Card, an analysis of the work of the Vision Zero Task Force, the City and the State Legislatures, to assess our collective progress toward preventing death and injury on New York City streets. We will continue to issue these report cards every 6 months, to ensure that this urgent work remains at the top of the agenda. Though it is heartening that the City saw a record low number of pedestrian deaths last year, it is clear that we still have a long way to go. As we approach the third year of our Vision Zero policy, it is critical that the Task Force establish a clear and public timeline, complete with annual injury and death reduction goals for each agency. All Vision Zero Task Force agencies should regularly issue progress reports, both to focus their efforts and to give the public benchmarks and a framework by which to measure the success of those efforts.

I am sure we were all dismayed by the recent crashes on Hylan Boulevard in Staten Island -- where two people needlessly lost their lives on a street that local residents have long identified as dangerous. Just last night, an SUV ran a red light at 180th Street and Atlantic Avenue, jumping a curb and hitting 3 innocent people. One of the women was killed, the other woman and her small child are fighting for their lives. The gruesome video showing a car jumping a curb and hitting children at a Bronx bus stop last week should also be on our minds during this hearing today. These crashes are reminders that there is more the City can do, and more it must do, to protect New Yorkers from traffic violence.

### **Street Redesign**

Vision Zero is about prevention, and the redesign of our most dangerous streets is core to the success of this policy. The streets themselves are a major factor in the safety of all who use them. We have long supported complete redesigns of our most dangerous arterial streets, and we urge the City to increase the amount of funding

available for these major projects. Arterial streets make up only 15% of the city's road network, but they are the site of more than half of all pedestrian fatalities. Fixing these dangerous streets must be our priority.

Already, we are seeing the benefits of the \$100 million commitment to redesign Queens Boulevard and make it into a Vision Zero Great Street. We must bring these benefits to more neighborhoods by expanding the budget for the Vision Zero Great Streets Program, and we must also increase the DOT's budget to implement more street safety improvement projects every year. We must scale up our efforts in year three to move the needle and save more lives.

Our approach to Vision Zero Great Streets must be equitable: communities across the five boroughs are demanding -- and deserve -- the kind of street safety improvements we've already seen in some parts of town. We should be bringing all of the proven design solutions to the table for the major projects to come. For example, the plans for the redesign of Atlantic Avenue in East New York are inadequate, missing an excellent opportunity to improve pedestrian and cyclist safety. Plans for Fourth Avenue, another Vision Zero Great Street, envision a completely different street design, one that is also short on some pedestrian and bicycle improvements. We would love to work with the Council to ensure that neighborhoods all over the City have access to the same street design standard, and that we are using all the elements in our design toolbox when it comes to fixing arterial streets.

This year, the DOT published Pedestrian Safety Action Plans, thorough problem statements that outline the most dangerous intersections and streets in each borough. They are an incredible resource in the Vision Zero effort. In order to make sure adequate progress is being made, we urge DOT to formulate a timeline to complete these safety plans. Furthermore, we encourage that there be a formal report on progress toward completion of the Pedestrian Safety Action Plans in order to ensure that this work continues in the years ahead and until it is completed.

## **Enforcement**

We were pleased to see the City Council and the Mayor take quick action on a dozen new traffic safety laws when Vision Zero began. However, these laws are only effective to the extent that they are enforced. If we are serious about reducing deaths and injuries, these traffic safety laws cannot exist merely on paper -- they must have real-life consequences. Section 19-190, also known as the Right of Way Law, has the power to serve as an effective deterrent to the kind of behavior that we know kills too many New Yorkers: failure to yield the right of way to pedestrians crossing the street. Each year failure to yield contributes to more than 10,000 crashes resulting in injury or death -- that's more than five times the number of crashes caused by driving while intoxicated. We applaud the City Council for rejecting attempts to gut the Right of Way Law by granting special exemptions to a subset of highly trained professional bus operators -- drivers who should be held to a higher standard, rather than a lower one. However, we are disappointed that this law is not being adequately enforced. In the first year since its enactment, Section 19-190 was enforced fewer than 40 times -- that's less than once a week. The law could have been applied in at least 1,100 crashes involving injury or death, which means we are looking at an enforcement rate of only 3.3%.

Far too many drivers are facing no consequences for dangerous driving behavior that seriously endangers New Yorkers. This is a problem that we can solve by improving crash investigations, empowering the NYPD Collision Investigation Squad to investigate more often, and by encouraging the District Attorneys to take traffic violence more seriously.

Crashes caused by speeding and failure to yield are increasing at a higher rate than last year, and we believe this is due in part to uneven enforcement. For example, the 42nd precinct in the Bronx issued 74 percent fewer summonses for failure to yield in the first six months of 2015, while the number of cyclists and pedestrians injured in the precinct increased 30 percent. Brooklyn's 62nd precinct issued 60 percent fewer speeding summonses and 80 percent fewer summonses for failure to yield, while the number of cyclists and pedestrians injured in the precinct increased 16 percent.

It is more important than ever that we redouble our efforts to bring data-driven enforcement standards to every precinct. Without consistent precinct leadership on speeding and failure to yield enforcement, we will slip back to

allowing a driving culture that is at odds with Vision Zero. We encourage the Council to do all it can at the district level to encourage precinct leadership and consistency in this regard.

### **Public Input**

Through our grassroots organizing networks, we at Transportation Alternatives have become aware that not all voices are treated equally when it comes to local decision-making. Even on community boards, where local residents ostensibly have the right to be heard, people's well-reasoned concerns about safety are too often ignored by board leadership. Too frequently, small, unrepresentative groups are blocking safety advancements local residents want. This is unfair and undemocratic. In the Vision Zero era, we need there to be multiple mechanisms for community input and we must empower the DOT to bring safety improvements swiftly to dangerous locations. In year three of Vision Zero we must give the role of community boards related to Vision Zero street safety projects a hard look to ensure we are enhancing, not slowing down, street redesigns that will save lives and prevent injury.

Thank you for your leadership and for the opportunity to testify before you today.

## **Vision Zero Key**

by Stephen Bauman, [sbauman@abt.net](mailto:sbauman@abt.net)

The magic bullet to reaching Vision Zero is reducing vehicle speed. We know the probability of a pedestrian being killed is: 10% at 20 mph; 20% at 25 mph; 30% at 30 mph; 55% at 40 mph and 90% at 50 mph.

Impact speed is the most important determinant for the severity of a pedestrian-vehicle collision. It does not matter whether the pedestrian was crossing outside a crosswalk or against the light. It does not matter whether the driver was texting, drunk or on his cell phone. Reduce road speed to below 25 mph and pedestrian fatalities will plummet regardless of all other factors.

Fatalities should have dropped by 33%, when the speed limit was reduced from 30 mph to 25 mph. This has not happened. The reason is that too many vehicles are still traveling in excess of 25 mph. Motorists routinely disobey the speed limit because they believe that speeding is not dangerous and that they will not be caught.

The NYPD has encouraged the latter belief by not vigorously enforcing the 25 mph speed limit. Their enforcement is crucial because speed cameras cannot be installed where and when pedestrian fatalities are likely to occur. No state laws limit the NYPD as to where or when they can issue speeding tickets. The NYPD requested and received modern speed detection equipment to catch speeders where they usually collide with pedestrians – on the street. To date their deterrent performance has been lackluster.

The NYPD's unwillingness to vigorously enforce the 25 mph speed limit is matched by their Collision Investigation Squad's (CIS) unwillingness to consider vehicle speeds over 25 mph as the major cause for pedestrian deaths. The data suggests the vehicle was traveling over the 25 mph speed limit in 80% of all pedestrian fatalities. That should be the initial presumption for CIS investigations and for on site statements by the responding precinct. Let the unnamed police sources statement quoted by newspapers be the effect that the vehicle was most likely exceeding the speed limit based on the pedestrian's injuries.

If the responding police limited their statement to this, some newspapers might be obliged to print it and not speculation as to what caused the collision. The public would be informed about what has been known for 40 years – it's impact/speed that causes fatalities. The automobile manufacturers have not publicized this because they believe vehicle speed sells cars. It's ironic because these findings were first presented at a Society of Automotive Engineers meeting. The hope was that the manufacturers would design car exteriors to protect pedestrians as they had designed the interiors to protect passengers. They haven't.

Ralph Nader alerted us to the fact that automobile interiors were dangerous in a collision. Automobile interiors were redesigned to protect the occupants. The annual death totals were reduced from 50,000 to 36,000. The number of collisions and the number of pedestrian fatalities have increased during the same period. The reduction is due to safer interiors for vehicle occupants. There is a similar paradigm with vehicle-pedestrian collisions. We can try to reduce the number of collisions through safe streets. However, more lives will be saved more quickly by reducing impact speed.

Testimony to New York City Council Committee on Transportation  
October 7, 2015  
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On behalf of my colleagues at StreetsPAC, I'd like to thank Chairman Rodriguez and the Committee on Transportation for holding this hearing today.

When Mayor de Blasio, just two weeks into his term in January 2014, announced the formation of the interagency working group on Vision Zero, it marked the setting of an ambitious-yet-crucial mission for New York – to reduce traffic deaths to zero within 10 years.

To be sure, we've made some notable progress toward that goal. Lowering the citywide speed limit to 25 miles per hour, activating the city's full complement of speed cameras, passing a law that makes it a crime to violate the Right of Way of people on foot and on bikes, rendering the vast majority of the Central and Prospect Park drives car-free, and beginning the transformation of Queens's notorious "Boulevard of Death" to a modern complete street are all important milestones. Pedestrian deaths fell to a record low in 2014, and we just might reduce that number again this year.

While this is progress, we still must acknowledge that we have a long, long way to go on the road to Vision Zero. Just last evening, another New Yorker was killed on a sidewalk when a red-light-running SUV driver in Richmond Hill triggered a crash that caused her to lose control and mount the curb. That crash also injured a toddler. In Staten Island on Monday night, two drivers killed pedestrians in separate crashes on Hylan Boulevard just three-and-a-half hours apart. Last week, an out-of-control cab driver struck a mother and four children on a Bronx sidewalk at high speed as they made their way to school. Miraculously, none of the five victims were killed. But crashes that cause death or life-altering injuries remain all too common, and dangerous driving remains too often the norm.

To have any hope of achieving Vision Zero by 2024, we must redouble our efforts. We must spend more – considerably more – to reengineer our streets, because while better enforcement and better education are important and laudable, the central tenet of Vision Zero is that people make mistakes, and therefore, we must design our streets for human fallibility.

We applaud Chairman Rodriguez's commitment to better fund the Department of Transportation in order to increase operational capacity, as well as his call to build 400 miles of protected bike lanes by 2030. That type of world-class infrastructure has been proved again and again to significantly reduce injuries and deaths, not only among people on bikes, but among walkers and drivers and transit riders alike. It's the type of engineering that saves lives, and it's key to Vision Zero.

We must rapidly expand the Great Streets Program to tackle the redesign of more dangerous corridors every year, and take on the redesign of our intersections, where far too many New Yorkers are injured or killed while crossing in crosswalks while they have right of way.

In short, we must be bolder; we must think bigger; we must act faster. We need to summon the political will necessary to implement the life-saving changes that will inevitably engender grumbling from some, if we're going to achieve Vision Zero for all.





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**Statement of AAA Northeast, Inc. before the New York City Council Committee on Transportation**

**New York, NY – October 7, 2015**

Good afternoon. AAA Northeast, which serves a membership of over 570,000 drivers in the 5 boroughs of New York City and over 1.6 million New York State drivers in the metropolitan area, is pleased to testify at this hearing, and we would like to thank the Committee on Transportation for holding it.

The City has made remarkable strides since the release of the Vision Zero Action Plan. DOT has improved more than 50 intersections. NYPD increased speeding enforcement by 42% and failure-to-yield by a whopping 125%. DOT has upgraded its education efforts by deploying Vision Zero Street Teams, holding community workshops, and airing powerful advertisements on the perils of unsafe driving.

The results have been dramatic: severe pedestrian injuries declined by 32% and severe vehicle occupant injuries declined by 43% from 2013 to 2014.

Further improvements promise even more reductions. DOT's data-driven approach, using the Vision Zero View map of injuries or fatalities and the Borough Pedestrian Safety Action plans, will guide priority engineering improvements. DOT plans to purchase more programmable speed display boards (113 were in use in 2014), increase the number of leading pedestrian intervals to encompass priority intersections citywide by 2017, and expand its off-hours delivery program to mitigate conflicts between large trucks and other road users. NYPD will increase its Highway District to 263 personnel.

However, we have some quibbles with the City's current direction and have included some suggestions:

**Seatbelt Law**

The City intends to lobby state legislators to change the seatbelt law to encompass passengers of for-hire vehicles, a position we fully support. We urge the City to go further and lobby for a requirement that *all* occupants, no matter their age, be restrained. (State law exempts rear seat occupants 16 and over).

The effectiveness of seatbelts in general is well known: in 2013, seatbelts saved 435 lives in New York State; 100% seatbelt usage would have saved 65 additional lives. The effect of rear-seat restraints is similarly positive, but less touted. Although adults comprise only 21% of rear seat occupants, they account for 60% of serious injuries sustained in the back, primarily due to their lower rate of seat belt usage. The risk of serious injury is eight times higher for unrestrained rear seat occupants than for restrained rear seat occupants. Additionally, unrestrained rear seat occupants are twice as likely to kill a front seat occupant by becoming a projectile.

New York State led the way by passing the nation's first seatbelt law in 1984, but we have fallen behind most states by failing to include adult rear seat occupants. We urge the City to join the call to have all rear seat occupants belted at all times. We also urge the City to continue to prioritize seat belt violations (see below) – especially given that Queens ranked 11<sup>th</sup> of 12 New York State counties in seat belt usage in a June 2015 survey.

## Enforcement Priorities – Cell Phone Use

The NYPD has reprioritized its enforcement to focus on the most dangerous violations, a trend that we applaud. The following charts show the enforcement patterns of selected violations from January-August:

Violation	2013	2014	2015	% Change
Disobey Steady Red Signal	26,887	37,509	37,125	38%
Disobey Traffic Control Device	92,182	107,025	112,576	22%
Fail to Signal	12,110	15,004	16,756	38%
Improper Turn	42,712	52,354	52,668	23%
Not Giving Right of Way to Pedestrian	9,302	22,810	26,338	183%
Not Giving Right of Way to Vehicle	1,553	2,289	2,390	54%
School Bus, Passing Stopped	800	1,937	2,142	168%
Speeding	56,420	75,776	87,986	56%
Unsafe Lane Change	3,049	3,884	4,479	47%
Brake Lights (Defective or Improper)	18,367	16,646	10,072	-45%
Cell Phone	92,049	78,935	58,410	-37%
Head Lights (Defective or Improper)	16,959	15,597	9,342	-45%
Safety Belt	87,391	74,756	58,932	-33%
Spillback	3,386	3,245	1,902	-44%
Tinted Windows	63,684	51,343	47,729	-25%
Truck Routes	4,413	3,361	2,851	-35%

Given limited resources, enforcement can be zero-sum, and all of the infractions with increased attention are important. Nevertheless, we urge the City to reverse the sliding trend of cell phone violations.

The City has been extremely data-driven, but cell phone use is often missed by crash reports and thus may be underestimated in the data. For example, of 3471 reported injury or fatal collisions in August 2015, cell phone use or texting was reported as a contributing factor in only 19 crashes. On the other hand, 3747 vehicles involved in such collisions were classified under the broad category of driver inattention/distraction. Clearly, cell phone use is underreported, and AAA research shows that distraction can be up to four times more prevalent than police reports indicate. The City must allocate forthcoming additions to the Highway Department and local precincts to crack down on this dangerous behavior.

## Automated Enforcement – Transparency and Dedication of Revenue

We support automated enforcement programs that are operated transparently, fairly, and effectively. The City has shown promising results at the macro level – injuries have declined by a third – but has yet to comply with state requirements to release data for each camera-enforced intersection.

With automated enforcement is increasing as a share of ticket revenue, according to the IBO, the City must not only commit itself to transparency to curtail skepticism, but also rededicate funds from red light and speed cameras to safety-minded projects. White Plains has pledged to be the first New York municipality to dedicate camera revenue above cost to safety initiatives; as a Vision Zero leader, New York City ought to beat them to the punch.

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: Michael O'Laughlin (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Cab Riders United

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 621 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: OCT 7, 2015

Name: STEPHEN BAUMAN (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 13810 FRANKLIN AVE FLUSHING NY 11355

I represent: SELF

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. Vanover Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 10/7/15

Name: Veronica Vanterpool (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Tri-State Transportation Campaign

Address: 350 W. 31st St #805

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. VISIQUERO OVERSIGHT Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 10/7/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: PAUL STEELY WHITE

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: OSMAN CHOWDHURY

Address: 43-42-45 ST APT #140

SUNNYSIDE NY 11104

I represent: UNITED TAXI DRIVERS ASSOC

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 10-7-15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: RYAN RUSSO

Address: 55 WATER ST NY NY

I represent: NYC DOT

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 10/7/15

Name: Keith Korman (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 520 E 72nd St / 1 Center Street

I represent: DCAS NYC

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 10/7/15

Name: Jeff Lynch (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: Assistant Commissioner for Intergovernmental

I represent: and Community Affairs, DOT

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 10/7/15

Name: Polly Teutenberg (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: Commissioner, DOT

I represent: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: Oct. 7, 2015

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Debbie + Harold Kahn

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Families for Safe Streets

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

◆ Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms ◆

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 10-7-15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Alec Slatky

Address: 72 Pacific Street, Massapequa Park, NY 11762

I represent: AAA No-thurst

Address: 1415 Kellum Place, Garden City, NY 11530

◆ Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms ◆

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 10/7/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Bill Heinzen

Address: 33 Beave

I represent: TLC

Address: 33 Beave St 22nd floor

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. VZ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 10/7/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: ERIC McCLURE

Address: 17 BATTERY PLACE, SUITE 204 10004

I represent: STREET SPAC

Address: 423 4th ST BK 11215

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms