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Vision Zero: Mayor de Blasio Announces 2016 Saw Fewest Fatalities Ever on New York City Streets

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Bucking strong national trends, 2016's 229 traffic fatalities were fewest ever in New York City, marking three years of decline and a 23 percent reduction since 2013

NEW YORK—Mayor Bill de Blasio announced that under the Vision Zero plan, New York City had its safest-ever year in 2016 with the fewest traffic fatalities ever recorded: 229, improving on the record of 234 set in 2015. Traffic fatalities have declined for three consecutive years, and are down 23 percentage overall since before Vision Zero began. With national trends showing traffic fatalities increasing over the last two years, the Mayor noted several other positive trends in 2016, including the success of street redesigns and a record-low number of fatalities among school-age children.

“No loss of life on our streets is acceptable. Under Vision Zero, we have now seen traffic fatalities in our City decline for three straight years, strongly countering national trends,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “I have said where Vision Zero is concerned, we are just getting started and can always do better, but I nevertheless want to thank the NYPD, DOT and supporting agencies on all their hard work to deliver another year of strong results.”

“The first three years of Vision Zero in New York has been the safest three-year period in history on our City’s roadways,” said **DOT Commissioner Polly Trottenberg**. “Under the Mayor’s leadership, we achieved the safest-ever year with the redesign of more streets than ever before and with close collaborative work with our colleagues at sister agencies. We are especially proud of this year’s innovative Vision Zero efforts -- like the *Cross This Way* curriculum, our pilot to make left turns safer and the Dusk & Darkness initiative – that we believe all combined to make a real difference.”

“2016 was the safest year on record in New York City. We are immensely proud of that accomplishment, but are committed to further reducing crime and making our streets even safer in this new year,” said **Commissioner James P. O’Neill**.

“Every life saved on our roads matters, because every life is a mother or father, sister or brother, friend or coworker,” said **Administrator Dr. Mark Rosekind of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, a division of the U.S. Department of Transportation**. “New York City’s commitment to Vision Zero shows that a comprehensive approach to road safety has measurable impacts, and the city serves as a model for the rest of the country as we commit ourselves to reaching zero traffic fatalities.”

Among notable Vision Zero achievements in 2016:

- **Bucking National Trends:** New York City's overall 23 percent decline in traffic fatalities since 2013 runs strongly counter to national trends. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, traffic fatalities nationwide last year saw their biggest increase in 50 years, a 7.1 percentage increase – with increases for 2016 forecasted to be even higher.
- **Record Number of Street Redesigns:** In 2016, DOT completed more than 100 safety projects, 165 miles of corridor safety retiming, 18.5 miles of protected bike lanes, 405 speed bumps and more than 750 pedestrian head-starts – all new records.
- **Fewer Fatalities at Vision Zero Priority Locations:** Since 2014, DOT has targeted over 175 high-crash intersections and corridors for redesign and other safety improvements; declines in traffic fatalities at these locations are outpacing the citywide decline in traffic deaths. For the five years prior to Vision Zero there were 141 deaths annually at Vision Zero priority locations; this year, there were 100 fatalities, a 29 percent decline. For pedestrians, there was a similar decline: 99 annual fatalities from 2009-13 at such locations to 72 in 2016, or 27 percent lower.
- **Fewest Ever Fatalities in Brooklyn:** Brooklyn led all boroughs with a record decline in traffic fatalities: 51 in 2016 compared to 67 in 2015, a 24 percent decrease. The previous one-year record low for traffic fatalities in Brooklyn had been 66 in 2009.
- **Substantial Decreases on Staten Island:** Staten Island also saw a marked decline in traffic fatalities: 17 fatalities in 2016 compared to 25 in 2015. Along Hylan Boulevard, fatalities were lowered from 8 last year to 4 this year. Hylan Boulevard had received special attention as a Vision Zero priority corridor: DOT added pedestrian head-starts and other pedestrian safety treatments, while the local NYPD precincts (including the 122, 123 and Highway 5) dramatically stepped up speeding enforcement.
- **Queens Boulevard:** This year, DOT completed a second phase of street redesign, transforming a 1.2-mile stretch from 74th Street to Eliot Avenue to include numerous safety improvements as well as a new protected bike lane. Once known as “the Boulevard of Death,” Queens Boulevard in 2016 had a second consecutive year without a single traffic fatality. In 1997, its worst year, Queens Boulevard had 18 pedestrian fatalities.
- **Lowest-Ever Fatalities Among School-Aged Children (aged 5-17):** No family should ever have to feel the tragic loss of a child from a traffic crash. This year, the City redesigned corridors and intersections and strengthened automated enforcement around schools. In addition, DOT and DOE collaborated to bring the *Cross This Way* curriculum to 4th through 6th grades citywide. Three children lost their lives on New York City streets, still an unacceptable number, but it was the fewest-ever annual traffic fatalities of children under 17. The previous five years have seen an average of 8 schoolchildren killed per year. As recently as 2004, 17 children were killed in a single year.
- **Dusk and Darkness Initiative:** An enforcement and education campaign dedicated to the fall and winter evening hours most dangerous to pedestrians, the Dusk and Darkness initiative yielded dramatic results after its announcement on October 27th: the fourth quarter of 2016 saw a 25 percent decline from the pre-Vision-Zero average of traffic fatalities (75 to 54). When the initiative began, New York City the number of people who had been killed in traffic crashes was above 2015 levels, but instead the year ended with a record-low number of fatalities.
- **Left-Turn Treatments:** After releasing a report in August, “Don’t Cut Corners,” that revealed how left turns lead to 3 times as many serious crashes as right turns, DOT began a pilot project to find ways to slow left turns at intersections around the five boroughs. DOT has completed the installation of those treatments at 107 intersections (86 in priority locations) – and will be evaluating and announcing results in 2017.

“The *Cross This Way* curriculum helps educate our youngest New Yorkers on how to safely navigate the City’s traffic as they travel to and from school each day,” said **Schools Chancellor Carmen Fariña**. “We

are grateful to the Department of Transportation for their partnership and look forward to continuing to share these essential lessons with children across the City.”

“It is encouraging to see yet another record low number of traffic fatalities throughout the city,” said **Health Commissioner Dr. Mary T. Bassett**. “With our sister agencies, we are as determined as ever to reach the City’s goal of zero traffic fatalities. I thank Mayor de Blasio for implementing unprecedented, innovative efforts that recognize this as a public health issue.”

“NYC government operates the largest fleet in the five boroughs and City employees are doing their part to achieve Vision Zero, by reducing fatalities and injuries” said **Department of Citywide Administrative Services Commissioner Lisette Camilo**. “We have trained over 30,000 staff in safe driving and went a step further in 2016 and barred the use of phones, hands-free or hand-held, by all City fleet drivers.”

“Over the past three years, the TLC has worked closely with the taxi and for-hire sectors to weave Vision Zero into the everyday fabric of our licensees’ lives,” said **TLC Commissioner Meera Joshi**. “From our Safety Honor Roll, where this year alone we put almost 400 of the safest TLC-licensed drivers in NYC in the spotlight, to the 35,000 drivers who received TLC Driver Education with its strong Vision Zero component in 2016, our licensees have become active partners in our drive to reach Vision Zero. TLC also doubled the number of officers trained in the use of LIDAR anti-speeding technology, so that cutting edge enforcement continues to bolster our education and outreach efforts.”

“I commend Mayor de Blasio for his and his administration's efforts to combat traffic fatalities at a level that has become a national model,” said **Council Transportation Chair Ydanis Rodriguez**. “While these numbers continue to drop, we cannot for one minute ease our efforts as pedestrians and cyclists remain at risk at a number of locations across the city. I know this administration is dedicated to redesigning these dangerous corridors and continuing to drive down traffic related deaths across the board. I’m eager to explore the successes and needs of Vision Zero in our upcoming committee hearing on January 26th.”

“The decline in traffic fatalities – especially among schoolkids – under Mayor de Blasio’s Vision Zero initiative is certainly welcome news and we look forward to continuing this trajectory,” said **Queens Borough President Melinda Katz**. “I commend Mayor de Blasio and all the agencies involved for their dedication to enhancing safety on city streets through important roadway enhancements and a laser-focus on priority locations.”

“New York City, due to the innovative Vision Zero program, has been a national leader in reducing traffic deaths and making our streets safer for everyone,” said **Council Member James Vacca**. “I’m glad that the city has made the effort to implement common-sense policies and initiatives in a comprehensive manner, touching on speeding, street design and overall transportation rules. Mayor de Blasio and Commissioner Trottenberg have done a wonderful job in bringing the promise of Vision Zero to reality. I look forward to continued improvements on our streets and roadways.”

“With national trends showing more traffic fatalities every year, it is heartening to see that the innovative policies we enacted three years ago are not only changing behaviors, but they are truly saving lives here in New York City,” said **Council Member Debi Rose**. “I know Vision Zero was not always popular on Staten Island, but our efforts have brought a downward trend in fatalities citywide and on Staten Island, where they dropped by nearly a third in the last year alone. I want these numbers reduced to zero, because every traffic death is a preventable tragedy. I will continue to work with the administration and my constituents to ensure that all New Yorkers are safe on our roads and sidewalks.”

"I was proud to sponsor key elements of Vision Zero in the City Council, and am even prouder of the results that it has produced in New York," said **Council Member David Greenfield**. "I want to congratulate the Mayor for his leadership and vision in implementing this bold initiative. It's not every day we get to make policies that literally save lives, but that's what Vision Zero is all about."

"Celebrating Vision Zero success should encourage all of us to work harder for more progress," said **Council Member Carlos Menchaca**. "The good news from 2016 proves we can substantially reduce danger and loss of life with advocacy, education, and thoughtful street designs that accommodate all users. When City agencies and New Yorkers work together we save lives. In 2017, we must use every tool at our disposal to achieve our Vision Zero goals. "

"A record year of safety on our streets is no coincidence," said **Council Member Stephen Levin**. "The City's steadfast commitment to Vision Zero has resulted in tangible improvements to the safety of New Yorkers everywhere. Let's continue doing the work that takes us closer to our ambitious goal – investing in proven, effective transit improvements and enforcing traffic laws that value life over expediency. I applaud Mayor de Blasio and will continue to do my part to support this vision."

"The efforts of the Vision Zero campaigns continue to save lives as our streets are safer to cross than any other year on record," said **Council Member Donovan Richards**. "Slowing drivers down, improving street designs and building bike lanes has delivered results across the City. I'd like to thank Mayor de Blasio, DOT Commissioner Trottenberg and NYPD Commissioner O'Neill for all their hard work and dedication to taking every measure to make New York City safer for pedestrians."

For more information on 2016 Vision Zero safety data, please see [here](#). For more information about the de Blasio Administration's Vision Zero initiative, please see www.nyc.gov/visionzero.

NYC TRAFFIC FATALITIES (2013-16)

	Peds	Cyclists	Motorcyclists	Motor Vehicle Occupants	Total
2016	144	18	19	48	229
2015	139	14	22	59	234
2014	140	20	37	61	258
2013	184	12	42	61	299

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