



Public Hearing on Adopted Vision Zero Legislation June 11, 2014

My name is Ryan Lynch and I am the associate director for the Tri-State Transportation Campaign a regional policy watchdog organization working for better transit and transportation policy in New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut.

Millions of pedestrians use NYC's streets daily yet many of our streets remain among the most deadly for walkers, bikers, and drivers. Regardless of one's primary mode of transportation, every NYC resident, transit user, or visitor is a pedestrian at some point in the day.

Since 2005, nearly 1,200 pedestrians have been killed by vehicles in the five boroughs. While there has been a 34% reduction in pedestrian fatalities as a result of progressive design changes made by NYCDOT over the past seven years, much more work remains. Too many people are killed and seriously injured on New York City's roadways. The knowledge and tools to prevent these deaths already exists. What has not existed before this year is a coordinated, multi-agency plan to apply this knowledge and use the tools to increase pedestrian safety; this is what the Mayor de Blasio's Vision Zero Action Plan does.

But achieving zero traffic fatalities will only occur with effective implementation. The NYC Council took an important step in passing a package of "Vision Zero" legislation last month. The six bills and seven resolutions under consideration during this hearing are the embodiment of an implementation strategy that moves quickly and with purpose. We urge the Mayor to sign them and continue to be at the vanguard of thoughtful policies and infrastructure design changes that will achieve this ambitious goal.

While all of these bills are important to achieving safer streets for all who use them, the measures that would do the most to aggressively combat reckless driving and improve the safety of New Yorkers and visitors alike are unfortunately, and bewilderingly, left in Albany's hands.

For example, Resolution 111, which would allow New York City to lower its speed limit to 25 miles an hour on its own roads, still awaits action in the New York Senate with only days left in this legislative session. And Resolutions 117 and 118, which would give New York City control over its own speed and red light camera programs, respectively, continue to depend on the New York State Legislature's approval.

New York City transportation enforcement and policy cannot continue to be handcuffed by state legislators in Albany. We should not have to request reauthorization to manage speeds on roads outside our front doors, nor request permission to establish and expand red light or speed cameras programs that protect all users of our City's roadways.

Lower speed limits, red light and speed cameras have been proven time and again to save lives. Mayor de Blasio has shown leadership during the first six months of his administration to protect New Yorkers from preventable death and injury and we urge him to support these legislative items under consideration. But more importantly, we call on elected officials in Albany to give New York City the tools it needs to achieve "Vision Zero."