

Coalition Recommendations to the City of Boston

Presented November 9, 2015

To: City of Boston Vision Zero Task Force

From: Massachusetts Vision Zero Coalition

The Massachusetts Vision Zero Coalition offers the recommendations below to the City of Boston for the implementation of a comprehensive Vision Zero Action Plan.

In the wake of a series of tragic and preventable crashes, injuries, and fatalities, it is more important than ever to focus the priority of transportation policies and projects on safety. We applaud the City's public commitment to Vision Zero—an important first step in bringing the number of fatalities on our streets to zero.

The Massachusetts Vision Zero Coalition advocates for the implementation of Vision Zero in Boston and for the adoption of Vision Zero throughout the metro area and state of Massachusetts. The new and growing coalition includes community-based organizations, nonprofits, businesses, civic groups and individuals representing communities across the state.

Below we have outlined steps the City can take to improve safety on our streets. To underpin these recommendations, we also recommend the establishment of an interagency group to work jointly on Vision Zero policy and projects, including all agencies that own and operate roads within Boston -- including MassDOT, the City, DCR, MBTA and other road owners. Many of the most dangerous roads are joint-custody/multi-jurisdictional.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Engineering

- **Establish an automatic response Action Plan for when a crash happens**, including a reserved budget for short-term improvements, a publicized timeline, and universal elements such as a site audit and a public statement of intended short-term fixes.
- **Incorporate immediate and inexpensive design solutions at crash locations and other dangerous areas** that improve safety while securing funding for full

scale street reconstruction, similar to the People St initiative launched by LADOT (<http://peoplest.lacity.org/>).

- **Create and publicize plans for maintenance of existing infrastructure.** Utilize temporary fixes, maintenance, and retrofits to build a foundation for larger holistic improvements. For example, interim repaving of Mass Ave between Boylston and Symphony before winter would drastically improve safety for cyclists and reduce conflicts.
- **Focus on winter** by establishing clear policies regarding plowing, shoveling and parking to ensure roadways and sidewalks are clear and safe for people using all modes.
- **Implement a citywide truck route Vulnerable Road Users (VRU) safety audit and establish a comprehensive loading zone program,** including rush-hour restrictions on commercial loading/unloading where it causes safety problems. Set new permitting requirements for loading zone use that restricts use by unsafe trucking companies and by trucks that are too large to be safe for deliveries in given neighborhoods. Washington, D.C. and Seattle provide good models for managing the dangers to VRUs of large trucks in the urban environment.
- **Increase the budget currently allocated to Vision Zero by the City.**

Education

- **Launch a broad-based education and social marketing campaign around Vision Zero.** Implement a large-scale education campaign that targets behaviors such as speeding and distracted driving that are most likely to cause serious crashes.
- **Build an anti-speeding campaign.** Speeding must be framed in the same context as drunk driving. Examples include developing a visual campaign aimed at drivers, via signs on buildings, bus banners, billboards, that calls out speeding as a dangerous and irresponsible behavior and stressing the danger of what driving five mph over the posted speed limit can do to a struck pedestrian.
- **Establish a driver ticket diversion program** that requires drivers that have endangered or injured VRUs to complete a safe driving training, including confronting the grief of victims' survivors and how reckless driving destroys lives. Transportation Alternatives and New York City have similar programs using videos of victim's families followed by discussions with the offending drivers.
- **Develop a commercial driver Vision Zero training program** about VRU safety and require all truck and bus operators either contracted by the City or that use City loading zones (see above recommendation to establish these) and

bus stops to complete it; incentivize all private commercial fleets that operate through Boston to also complete it. Great examples are San Francisco MTA's commercial driver program and the MBTA's bus driver training program.

Enforcement

- **Heighten enforcement of laws against unsafe and distracted driving behavior.** The enforcement of current laws regarding texting, running red lights, speeding, and other dangerous driving behaviors could be enhanced by red light and speed cameras. The Coalition will work with the City and state legislators to pass the needed legislation to allow the use of cameras.
- **Enforce against cars and trucks parking and idling in bike lanes.** This can be creatively enforced through a program similar to one in New York City where people can send in pictures of taxis that are parked in the bike lane and they are automatically fined.

Evaluation

- **Prioritize the Boston Police Department's adoption of the MassDOT enhanced crash reporting form** already adopted by other communities in Massachusetts. Having comprehensive data will allow crashes to be tracked, analyzed, and avoided and qualify the City for more MassDOT safety programs.
- **Examine every crash and resulting in death or injury on our roads.** Continue to work to determine the cause of the crash, and develop a plan for preventing future tragedies. Injuries and fatalities should not continue to happen at the same location without action. Every traffic death and serious injury should be followed by a BPD crash reconstruction.
- **Collect more data on moving violations to inform enforcement and engineering modifications.**
- **Establish a regular schedule for publishing crash and injury data.** For reference see NYC's Vision Zero View: <http://www.nycvzv.info/> and NYC Datasets: http://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/html/about/vz_datafeeds.shtml

Equity

- **Prioritize dangerous zones in under-resourced communities.** Focus our limited safety funding on improvements and engineering near schools and in historically underserved communities, starting with High Crash Corridors and our most dangerous intersections.
- **Ensure that enforcement measures do not disproportionately impact minority and marginalized communities.**

Encouragement

- **Establish and publicly announce an official City policy to not use the word “accident” in any reference to roadway crashes.** This would include the Transportation and Police Departments and is similar to policies announced in New York City and San Francisco.
- **Expand and reorganize the current city task force to include more areas of work.** This would involve more people and also expand the power, publicity, and reach of the Task Force. Portland, OR, for example, added a public engagement committee and program committee.

Thank you for your commitment. We are excited to work with you on an action plan.

Sincerely,

Massachusetts Vision Zero Coalition

- WalkBoston
- TransitMatters
- USPIRG
- Safe Roads Alliance
- MassBike
- LivableStreets Alliance
- DotBike
- Boston Cyclists Union