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Eerie reminders of fatal crashes coming to city streets



By Steve Annear GLOBE STAFF NOVEMBER 18, 2016

A coalition calling for safer streets for pedestrians and cyclists is placing stark and ghostly reminders around the city this week near spots where people have been killed in crashes with motor vehicles.

Members of the [Massachusetts Vision Zero Coalition](#) have created white plastic cutouts shaped like people, and they are fastening the eerie silhouettes to lamp posts and street signs.

The effort comes ahead of [World Day of Remembrance](#), an international event “for publicly mourning victims of traffic violence.” The aim is to call attention to dangerous streets and intersections.

Organizers said they also want to promote the concept that traffic-related fatalities should be considered crashes, and not accidents.

“Crashes are not accidents — they’re the tragic, preventable results of inadequate planning and policy. People make mistakes; our streets must be designed so those mistakes are not fatal,” according to a statement from the LivableStreets Alliance, which advocates for safer, multi-modal roadways.

The alliance is one of the 11 members of the Massachusetts Vision Zero Coalition, which calls for the implementation of “Vision Zero” policies across the state.

Other members of the coalition include the Massachusetts Bicycle Coalition and the Boston Cyclists Union.

Vision Zero, an international road safety initiative, focuses on eliminating fatal and serious crashes in a given community. Both Cambridge and Boston have committed to the concept.

World Remembrance Day is Sunday. It will begin with a memorial bike ride, followed by an organized walk through parts of Boston, and a rally on the steps of the State House. Attendees are being encouraged to wear yellow in a show of support for those who have been killed.

Leading up to the event, at least 14 human-shaped cutouts will be visible throughout the area. The cutouts will be placed in South Boston, Dorchester, Roslindale, Chinatown, Allston, Beacon Hill, Back Bay, Fenway, Chinatown, and parts of Cambridge. The first four went up on Thursday, with another 10 going up Friday and Saturday, organizers said.

The plastic figures are reminiscent of “ghost bikes,” bicycles that are painted white and positioned at the scene of fatal bike crashes.

Each cutout is labeled with the date that a person died at a specific location. Some include the victim’s name. The hashtag #CrashNotAccident and a promotional tag for World Remembrance Day, #WDR2016, are also scrawled on the cutouts in black marker.

“We know what works - this isn’t an issue of coming up with brand-new solutions. Streets that are properly designed for all people are safe streets,” said LivableStreets Alliance executive director Stacy Thompson said in a statement. “The hard work is implementing these designs in cities and towns across Massachusetts.”

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