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‘Streets Are For People’ vigil held at Boston City Hall Plaza



DAVID L. RYAN/GLOBE STAFF

Hundreds of people wearing yellow stickers that read “Safe Streets Now” gathered at City Hall Plaza Friday in response to recent comments from Boston Mayor Martin Walsh.

By [Maria Cramer](#) GLOBE STAFF MAY 19, 2017

A small vigil was held at Boston City Hall Plaza Friday in response to recent comments by Boston Mayor Martin J. Walsh that pedestrians and cyclists need to be more careful traversing the streets.

The vigil, attended by a group of about 20 advocates dressed in black, was held as hundreds of other cyclists celebrated “National Ride Your Bike to Work Day’ in the plaza and included a moment of silence for cyclists and pedestrians who have been struck by vehicles in the city.

Organizers of the vigil then distributed about 300 yellow stickers that read “Safe Streets Now” to those gathered outside City Hall.

After the vigil, one of the activists, Erica Mattison, said the city has invested in making the streets safer for pedestrians and cyclists, but more needs to be done — like adding more protected bike lanes and crosswalks and building raised crosswalks.

“Clearly, our transportation does not work for people,” said Mattison, 35, who works in environmental advocacy and lives in Dorchester. “We have a very dysfunctional transportation system. We need to send a stronger message.”

A petition calling for safer streets was later brought to Walsh’s office on the fifth floor.

A coalition of nonprofits, businesses, and civic organizations organized the “Streets Are for People” event and asked attendees to dress in black for “a silent moment of solidarity with the victims of traffic violence.”

The vigil came after Walsh made comments that rattled the bike and pedestrian activists during a WGBH radio interview this week, the Globe reported Friday.

“Pedestrians need to put their head up when they’re walking down the street, take your headphones off, cross in the crosswalk, follow the lights,” Walsh said. “Even bicyclists, when you’re riding — a car can’t stop on a dime.”

His comments drew a sharp rebuke from the Massachusetts Vision Zero Coalition, which demanded an apology. “On behalf of those victims, we also ask that you apologize for the comments you made on the air,” the coalition wrote to Walsh this week.

Walsh on Thursday announced a \$1 million increase in next year’s Vision Zero funding. The money is dedicated to the Neighborhood Slow Streets program, which allows neighborhoods and other groups to apply for city-installed traffic calming measures. Better funding for the program was among the list of requests in the coalition letter.