

To: Mayor Martin J. Walsh
Re: 2018 Vision Zero Progress Report for Boston

April 17, 2019

Dear Mayor Walsh -

In 2015 the City of Boston committed to Vision Zero, a data-driven effort to reduce the number of serious and fatal crashes on our streets to zero. Since then, The Massachusetts Vision Zero Coalition has issued an annual report assessing the City's progress toward its Vision Zero goals. Enclosed you will find our third annual report.

More than three years after the city's initial commitment, the number of fatal crashes has measurably decreased with 10 fatal crashes in 2018, down from 21 fatalities in 2016. Given this progress, we believe reaching zero fatalities by 2030 is achievable.

Unfortunately, the total number of crashes requiring EMS response has increased over this same time period, with more than 4,367 total injury crashes in 2018.

The Coalition sees the drop in fatalities as a promising shift, but also acknowledges that any crash can be a life-altering experience, so we must continue to focus on strategies that reduce the overall number of injury crashes on our streets. We believe in Boston's ability to lead on Vision Zero, and set an example for other cities in the United States.

The City's progress is due in large part to the commitment and diligence of many individuals on the Vision Zero team and throughout the Public Health Commission, and the Transportation, Public Works, and other departments. The Neighborhood Slow Streets program is incredibly popular, and has been recognized nationally for its equitable selection process. And the analysis of sidewalk conditions citywide and subsequent capital investment in improvements is an important step toward ensuring all neighborhoods receive equitable investment in infrastructure. These successes, among others, are due to the great work of individuals who are championing Vision Zero and demonstrating leadership in how to communicate principles and execute projects that fit the goals of the program.

However, the burden to eliminate serious and fatal traffic crashes should not fall on the shoulders of just a few individuals. A true Vision Zero approach needs to be collaborative and well-integrated within and across the Transportation, Public Works, Public Health, and Police Departments. There are still clear gaps in the integration of Vision Zero across departments, and this is slowing down the City's ability to act swiftly and efficiently on its Vision Zero goals. For example, the signals policy released by the Transportation Department engineering team in the summer of 2018 did not conform with or support the Vision Zero policies that department leadership has promulgated.

And, despite the additional funding and staffing resources provided to the Transportation Department in Fiscal Year 2019, increased cohesion within the Transportation and Public Works departments, as well as across all relevant departments, is needed for these resources to be used effectively. As the Transportation Department continues to integrate new staff members, creating clear organizational structures is necessary to establish how projects will be managed and executed. We recommend taking advantage of the impending departure of the

Transportation Commissioner and vacant Public Works Commissioner Position to combine the Public Works and Transportation Departments into one, integrated agency.

We also recommend the City issue an updated Vision Zero Action Plan to create greater cross-departmental alignment and ensure that the City is on track with its 2030 goal. This Action Plan should include indicators of success and specific action items, each of which have a clear timeline, benchmarks for tracking progress, and a lead department or team, and should be updated regularly to ensure the plan is a living document. This framework is aligned with the *Vision Zero Action Plan Guidelines* recommended by the national Vision Zero Network, of which Boston is a member. This foundational document will help the City to incrementally realize projects year by year in a manner that prioritizes equitable investments in Boston's streets and residents. Many other leading Vision Zero cities regularly release updated Action Plans.

And lastly, we encourage regularly communicating back to the public the City's Vision Zero progress and providing more details about goals, timelines, and teams and/or departments responsible for implementing Vision Zero projects. This level of detail will build knowledge and trust with the public, and increase transparency and accountability around this important initiative.

We encourage the City to build off the success of several projects, the support of City Council, and the leadership of staff to integrate Vision Zero principles more fully throughout operations, processes, and communications.

We look forward to working with the City over the coming year to ensure we meet our Vision Zero goals.

Sincerely,
Massachusetts Vision Zero Coalition