

# The Daily Free Press

## Fiscal Year 2017 budget to emphasize traffic safety

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Traffic safety will be a highlighted component of Boston Mayor Martin Walsh's proposed 2017 Fiscal Year budget, according to his presentation to the Boston City Council on Thursday. PHOTO BY KANKANIT WIRIYASAJJA/DAILY FREE PRESS STAFF

Boston Mayor Martin Walsh announced Thursday that traffic safety in Boston will play a large role in the proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2017, according to a Thursday press release.

The release stated that \$3.1 million will be geared toward traffic improvements this year, and \$9.3 million will be spent over the next three years. This money will go to Vision Zero, an international movement that aims to end traffic-related fatalities and make general safety improvements.

Walsh said in the release that city officials value having a safe infrastructure for the people of Boston.

"It is important that our transportation infrastructure provides the best and safest way for people to travel throughout the City of Boston," Walsh said in the release. "Ensuring the safety of all of our residents and visitors is a top priority and these investments will help bring us one step closer to achieving Vision Zero and creating safer streets across our city."

The released stated that \$2 million of the proposed FY 2017 budget will go toward improving Boston's traffic signal network, which is overdue for maintenance upgrades. Another \$900,000 will be allotted to help mend the city's network of bike transportation.

Jackie DeWolfe, executive director of the LivableStreets Alliance, said she was excited for the allocation of funds to improve the local infrastructure.

“It’s really big news and important to see the investment being made,” DeWolfe said. “It’s one thing to have an idea, but another thing to actually say that we want to put our money behind this, so this is really a great thing.”

Brendan Kearney, spokesperson for WalkBoston, also said the investment is significant.

“I think they’re really emphasizing not just transportation, but safe mobility for all people,” Kearney said. “One thing is that with committing this money, it’s showing that the City of Boston’s transportation fund is taking people’s safety and mobility to heart.”

Kearney also said that additional precautions must to be taken to protect pedestrians who attempt to get around Boston.

“There’s a bunch of different things we can do,” Kearney said. “Some of them include fixing signal timing so it works for all people going through intersections, whether that is adding more pedestrian indications.”

Kearney said the City of Boston also needs to address intersections that have faced a dangerous number of collisions in recent years.

“The city has highlighted a number of intersections where there have been collisions from people walking, driving and biking, so now they’re trying to focus on those intersections for changes,” Kearney said.

Several Boston residents said they think extra funds for effort like this are necessary for everyone within the city.

Kevin Simmons, 63, of Back Bay, said these extra funds are important to protect families within the City of Boston.

“I’ve lived in Boston for a long time, and I’ve had my fair share of near incidents and have seen several collisions in my time,” he said. “I think it’s the right decision on Walsh’s part to give the transportation safety system some more funding, if not just for the safety in the increasing number of families here in Boston, kids running around Brookline, etc.”

Ashlea Clark, 30, of Brighton, said she was excited to see the city providing funds to encourage safety.

“This is a really important issue in big cities like Boston,” she said. “It’s important to try to keep everyone safe, and I’m glad that Mayor Walsh understands that and wants to do something about that.”

Chris Fisco, 30, of Back Bay, said safety should be a high priority for the City of Boston.

“Boston is a scary place to walk or bike sometimes,” he said. “Drivers can be crazy, and I’m really glad that Walsh wants to do something about it and wants to make sure everyone is being as safe as possible.”