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Mayor Walsh Announces Vision Zero Boston's Safety Concerns Map

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Boston Mayor Martin Walsh announced a new online tool, Vision Zero Boston Transportation Safety Concerns Map, which streamlines the ability to report locations where MassDOT riders feel unsafe. PHOTO ABIGAIL FREEMAN/DFP FILE PHOTO

Mayor Martin Walsh announced the introduction of the Vision Zero Boston's Safety Concerns Map at a press conference Friday. The map will allow residents to "identify locations where they have concerns regarding transportation safety," a Friday press release stated.

In the release, Walsh encouraged residents to visit Vision Zero Boston's website and to document their concerns.

"The Safety Concerns Map is a great opportunity for people to share their ideas about how to improve roadway safety and create better and safer streets across our city," Walsh said in the release. "People who live and work in Boston know best about what is happening on their streets, and we look forward to engaging them in our transportation strategies."

Vision Zero is an advocacy group that focuses on eliminating fatal crashes throughout the city, according to the release. The map comes as a part of the Vision Zero Boston Action Plan, which was announced at a Dec. 9, 2015 press conference.

In the Dec. 9 release, Walsh said Vision Zero takes a meaningful approach to ensure safer transportation.

"Our Vision Zero Action Plan outlines a thoughtful strategy to improve roadway safety and put the City of Boston on track towards eliminating all traffic-related fatalities on our streets," Walsh said.

“Ensuring the safety of all of our residents and visitors is a top priority, and it is important that we continue to make strides in creating better and safer streets across our city.”

Charlotte Fleetwood, transportation planner for the Boston Transportation Department and a member of the Vision Zero Task Force, wrote in an email that Vision Zero challenges the city to create a less dangerous environment.

“[The Boston Transportation Department] knows that speeding, distracted driving and impaired driving are issues that we need to tackle,” Fleetwood wrote in an email. “We will be working with our partners in the city and with Vision Zero leaders in other cities to find the most effective ways to make our streets safe for people of all ages to walk, ride a bike or drive a car.”

Amanda Skahan, spokesperson for Massachusetts Department of Transportation, said Vision Zero Boston is an efficient method for gathering public feedback.

“[MassDOT] finds the use of crowdsourcing to gather information to be innovative, and we are supportive of this new method for obtaining information,” she said. “The more information that is received, the better that city and state transportation departments can identify areas in need of improvement.”

LivableStreets Alliance, an organization that promotes “safe, convenient, and affordable transportation in urban Boston,” has partnered with Vision Zero Boston to ensure street safety, according to the group’s website.

Stacy Thompson, deputy director of LivableStreets, said Vision Zero Boston’s mission resonates with residents because it lacks complexity.

“What is really compelling about Vision Zero is that the vision is simple, that there are zero fatalities on our streets — period,” Thompson said. “So what that means is that we are focused on making our city safer.”

Thompson said Livable Streets and Vision Zero Boston are focusing on multiple ways to improve street safety.

“A successful Vision Zero involves what we call the “Three Es,”” Thompson said. “The idea is that you include things like engineering and education and equity in your problem and incorporate all these components. That is how you are able to create a measureable decrease in fatalities and ultimately reach zero [fatalities].”

Several residents said they had not heard of Vision Zero Boston, but they thought of the city’s transportation as safe.

Jason Hogue, 48, of Dorchester, said any way to improve transportation is beneficial for the city.

“Anything that’s going to make [transportation] safer is a good thing, obviously,” he said. “However, implementing things doesn’t necessarily make things better.”

Tatiana Garces, 36, of East Boston, said while transportation is safe, it is not always dependable.

“I think it’s safe — we have cameras everywhere,” she said. “I never feel like I’m going to be attacked, I just feel like it’s not reliable.”

Michael Zank, 57, of Jamaica Plain, said he does not have concerns over transportation safety.

“I don’t worry about safety on the [transportation system],” he said. “[Boston transportation is] perfectly safe.”

