

LETTERS

Memos to Mayor Walsh on the state of the city

Updated January 13, 2020, 5:19 p.m.



Mayor Martin J. Walsh walks off the stage to a standing ovation after delivering his annual State of the City address at Symphony Hall on Jan. 7. JESSICA RINALDI

Bike, pedestrian advocates offer additional ways to boost traffic enforcement

In last week's State of the City address (["Mayor calls for bolder action on transportation, housing,"](#) Page A1, Jan. 8), Mayor Martin J. Walsh tasked the

Boston Police and Transportation departments to “[implement a plan to strengthen traffic enforcement](#)” in Boston. As bicycle and pedestrian advocates on the city’s Vision Zero Task Force, we have some suggestions on what should be included in that plan.

Over the last few years, we have encouraged the city and the Police Department to hire a full-time crash data analyst to clean up motor vehicle crash report data and investigate trends, since [data quality](#) and access issues have plagued the Boston Police [for years](#). Mayor Walsh allocated money in the fiscal 2020 budget for this position. We have learned recently that this role still has not been filled. Hiring this budgeted position should be the first step taken in any traffic enforcement plan so that data-informed decisions can thoughtfully improve traffic safety.

Another way the mayor could strengthen traffic enforcement and cut down on dangerous driving behavior is to support Senator William N. Brownsberger’s bill, [An Act Relative to Automated Enforcement](#), a municipal opt-in bill that has 23 cosponsors and was reported favorably out of committee in November. The mayor has his own bill, but it is limited to a don’t-block-the-box, targeting clogged intersections. Home rule petitions for automated enforcement [have been filed outside of Boston as well](#), demonstrating the growing support for this proven strategy.

Automated enforcement for running of red lights and speeding has been shown to reduce unsafe driving behavior, the number of crashes, and the

severity of crash-related injuries. This approach, which is used in 29 other states, also de-emphasizes officer-initiated traffic stops that can lead to racial profiling.

We urge Mayor Walsh to include these two suggestions in the plan to strengthen traffic enforcement in Boston.

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