To Err is Human,
To Forgive Design

Promoting Safe Streets through Roadway Design

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Traffic Violence: A Public Health Crisis

Good (?) news:

Traffic fatalities went down slightly in 2017 – with “only” 37,133 deaths on US roads.

FYI: There were 17,284 murders in 2017 and only 1 death in commercial aviation.
The personal face of the crisis:

- “Drive Like your Family Lives Here” (video)
  - Produced by
  - Families for Safe Streets and
  - NYC Department of Transportation

- It’s personal for me.
Class 3 bike “lanes” marked by “Sharrows” offer no protection

I was riding where this cyclist is, when a NYPD patrol vehicle made an illegal U turn and slammed me to the pavement. I could have had a ghost bike for this.
83-Year-Old Woman Struck and Killed by SUV in Woodside (a block from my grandson’s school.)

From a neighbor: “I knew your aunt—we were neighbors for many years. She always had a smile. I’m sorry for your loss.”
Child dies; Driver charged for leaving scene

From CBS and other news (4/29/18)

• Police said 9 year old Giovanni Ampuero and his mother were crossing Northern Boulevard near 70th Street around 1:30 p.m. Saturday when they were struck by a red Jeep Compass making a left turn.
Some traffic calming measures were instituted after Giovanni’s death.

1. High visibility ("Zebra") crosswalks repainted;
2. Elevated center median to discourage corner cutting (which improves drivers’ visibility for pedestrians in crosswalk;
3. LPI (Lead Pedestrian Interval) – Pedestrian signal (white man) comes on before the green light for cars.
53%: Dangerous Driver Choices
30%: Dangerous Pedestrian Choices
17%: Dangerous Driver and Pedestrian Choices

Data: NYC DOT 2008-2012
To err is human*…
to forgive design**

** Support Vision Zero

- roadway redesign to make streets safer
- Started in Sweden
- Expanded to other cities
- Introduced in 2014 in NYC
No level of fatality on City streets is inevitable or acceptable.

Vision Zero
Action Plan  City of New York  Mayor Bill de Blasio  2014
• **Designate lanes:**
  Clarify who belongs where on the street through better markings

• **Clear merges and transitions:**
  Improve alignments and clearly mark merges to simplify driving

• **Add crosswalks:**
  Clarify where pedestrians are crossing through markings

• **Open up intersections to improve visibility:**
  Remove visual barriers such as parking that can cause traffic crashes and injuries near intersections

• **Widen the parking lane:**
  Keep cars and trucks loading and unloading out of the travel lanes when double-parked

• **Add bike paths and lanes:**
  Clearly designate the bicyclist right-of-way

• **Create new left turn lanes:**
  Relieve pressure on drivers to turn too quickly or too soon by creating dedicated space for turning

• **Left turn phases:**
  Separate turning traffic from oncoming traffic and pedestrians

• **Eliminate unsafe turn movements:**
  Shift left and right turns to other intersections with better conditions for visibility and traffic

• **Leading pedestrian intervals:**
  Give pedestrians a head start at the light

• **Leading bus interval:**
  Give buses a head start at the light

• **Install speed bumps:**
  On residential streets, speed bumps remind traffic to travel at low speed

• **Time traffic signals for “green waves”:**
  Keep drivers traveling together at a consistent speed of travel

• **Reduce night-time speeding with signal timing:**
  Cut down on opportunities for speeding outside of rush hour

• **Add signals and controls:**
  Eliminate confusion for all users

• **Increase street lighting level:**
  Improve visibility at night in high-crash areas

• **Pedestrian safety islands:**
  Shorten crossing distance and add visual cues for drivers

• **Extend curbs to bring pedestrians into the line of sight for drivers:**
  Shorten crossing distances and extend curbs at intersections for better visibility

• **Lower speed limits:**
  Lower speed limits to send the message that drivers are entering school zones or other areas with heavy pedestrian traffic

• **Accessibility improvements:**
  Accessible pedestrian signals and curb cuts
Sunnyside Protected Bike Lanes

response to community outcry after the death of Gelasio Reyes who was killed in April 2017 riding home from work on his bike
Mayor Bill de Blasio @NYCMayor
Nearly 300 people have been injured along Skillman and 43rd Avenues in Queens. 2 lives have been lost.

@NYC_DOT has listened to voices across the community. I've instructed them to move forward with pedestrian safety and protected bike lanes that will save lives. #VisionZero
Sunnyside Bike Lane
I’m proud of my community – the bike lane is cleared before anything else!
It did not come without struggle –
Here’s what opponents said:

1. We’ll lose parking spaces,
2. It will hurt local businesses,
3. Emergency vehicles will not get through and
4. Pedestrians will get hurt.

(Only one of these actually happened.)
Days after bike lane installation
Police were investigating after thumbtacks were found in a bike lane in Queens this week, an NYPD spokesman said. The tacks, with the points facing up, were discovered in the protected bike lane on 43rd Avenue in Sunnyside by a father who was biking with his two children Wednesday morning. “I had a tire blowout on my bike and on one of the wheels in the bike cart I had my two children in,”
NYC traffic deaths

• In 2013 before Vision Zero started, there were 299 traffic deaths in the city.

• In all of 2017, there were 221 traffic deaths in the city, 105 of them pedestrians.

• Vision Zero data shows the total figure came down to 198, in 2018.
Traffic Safety Educators are on the team
(even if Vision Zero has not come to your neighborhood)

Improve state driver education to improve interactions with pedestrians and bicyclists

In New York City, large numbers of pedestrians and drivers co-exist in close proximity. The City has also seen bicycle riding quadruple over the last decade, with a 50% increase in the last five years alone. In addition, the launch of the Citibike program in May 2013 added millions of new bike trips. In the DMV mandated pre-licensing course, prospective drivers are not tested on safe roadway practices around pedestrians and bicyclists, despite their heavy presence on city streets.
Thank you for your attention!
When will there be a “safety check” on the driver?

- **Feb 19, 2019**

  - According to police, a 12-year-old boy was trying to cross Sunrise Highway at Washington Avenue at 3:20 p.m. when he was hit by a 2008 Chevy Impala being driven by an 88-year-old woman.
  - Police say the boy suffered serious injuries and was taken to a nearby hospital. The driver stayed at the scene.
  - Police say there does not appear to be any criminality involved. A safety check was conducted on the car, and it was released to the driver.
  - The investigation is ongoing.
The fallacy of “I’ll know ....”

• 38 year old man was embarrassed because he had not gone for an eye exam for 10 years.
• He had no complaints and was driving.
• Shockingly, the doctor discovered glaucoma.
• Here are his visual fields (black = not seeing):

He wanted to know if he should continue driving.
• Giovanni was rushed to Elmhurst General Hospital where he was pronounced dead.

• The SUV fled the scene but was stopped a short distance away, police said.
  – The elderly driver, identified as 86-year-old Juan Jimenez, was charged with leaving the scene of an accident, failure to yield to a pedestrian and failure to exercise due care.
  – He was ordered held on $20,000 bond.
  – Leaving the scene of an accident that kills someone is a class D felony that can result in up to seven years in prison.
What the driver said

• "I'm sorry I hit the kid — I didn't see him," the elderly motorist told cops, according to court papers.
• "I was driving home to Manhattan from the casino. I made a left turn on Northern Blvd… when I made the turn a woman jumped in front of my car but I did not hit her."
• "I kept driving and a cab driver waved me down and told me I hit someone," Jimenez added. "It was an accident. I didn't mean to hit anyone. I didn't know I hit anyone."
• "I didn't run, it was just an accident," he added, when asked why he fled the scene. "I was scared. Some cab driver was threatening me."
• Driver error contributes over 90%:

When in doubt*, get checked out by a Driver Rehabilitation Specialist.

* Don’t make the mistake of thinking, “I’ll know …”