



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michael Gianaris

Senator Gianaris, DOT, NYPD Announce Expanded Enforcement, Planned Design Changes Along Northern Boulevard

MICHAEL GIANARIS October 10, 2018

| ISSUE: **TRAFFIC SAFETY, NORTHERN BOULEVARD, NYC DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, QUEENS**



The New York City Department of Transportation today announced that the City would take dramatic steps under Vision Zero to make Northern Boulevard safer. The major street, which extends the entire length of Queens from Astoria to Douglaston, had six traffic fatalities in 2017, and has seen four fatalities so far this year. Department of Transportation Commissioner Polly Trottenberg joined NYPD officials on Walk-to-School Day to highlight

enforcement and safety enhancements planned for Northern Boulevard, ahead of a series of community workshops to develop a comprehensive redesign of the corridor.

“Since the de Blasio Administration launched Vision Zero in early 2014, we have made many roadway safety improvements along Northern Boulevard each year, but tragically, this work has not been enough,” said **DOT Commissioner Polly Trottenberg**. “So today DOT and NYPD are standing together on Walk-to-School Day to announce a strong new enforcement effort. And we will kick off our first work shop next week with residents, elected officials, and other stakeholders to hear their ideas about how we can make Northern Boulevard safer.”

“Saving New Yorkers’ lives, especially when it comes to our most vulnerable neighbors – our children and the elderly – is our top priority,” said **NYPD Chief of Transportation Thomas M. Chan**. “The NYPD and our partners intend to strike the correct balance between education and enforcement, and we are doing that through intelligent leadership and comprehensive road redesign. Public safety in New York City will always be a shared responsibility with those we serve, whose input into this plan is imperative.”

The elements of the new efforts on Northern Boulevard are:

EXPANDED ENFORCEMENT

Beginning this week, the NYPD will begin a seven-week comprehensive enforcement program going along the entire 11 miles of Northern Boulevard. Called the High Visibility Enforcement program, the new pilot will run from October 1st through Thanksgiving, with each precinct along Northern — the 108,109,111, 114, and 115 — involved in the expanded enforcement effort, which will be overseen by Patrol Borough Queens North.

To supplement the enforcement, DOT/NYPD Street Teams will be placed along the corridor as well. These teams speak actively with drivers about Vision Zero priorities, including the

importance of maintaining a safe speed and yielding to pedestrians. Since September, these teams have been going out twice a week, with plans to visit all of the senior centers and all of the schools on and near Northern Boulevard before the end of the year.

DESIGN CHANGES

DOT has already brought a number of safety enhancements to Northern Boulevard, but design workshops planned for October will discuss additional improvements. DOT announced the following design workshop locations this month along the western end of the corridor:

Monday October 15, 2018

Jackson Heights/Elmhurst

Time: 6:30-8:30pm

Location: Louis Armstrong Middle School, 32-02 Junction Blvd

Monday October 22, 2018

Astoria/Woodside

Time: 6:30-8:30pm

Location: P.S. 151 Mary D. Carter School, 50-05 31st Ave

Monday October 29th

Astoria/Long Island City

Time: 6:30-8:30pm

Location: PS 166, 33-09 35th Ave

Under Vision Zero, DOT has already completed the following safety improvements along Northern Boulevard:

- In 2014, after 8-year-old Noshat Nahian was killed, DOT constructed pedestrian safety islands on Northern Boulevard and 61st Street, banned the westbound left turn from Northern Boulevard, installed an Leading Pedestrian Interval (LPI), installed new crosswalks, and implemented off-peak signal retiming to discourage speeding.
- A 2015 Safety Improvement Project from 62nd to 102nd Street included construction of pedestrian safety islands, signal poles, high visibility crosswalks and LPIs at intersections.
- In 2016 and 2017 DOT constructed 4 pedestrian islands 2 curb extensions and 2 triangle reconstructions, and made changes at 48th St to reduce conflicts between pedestrian and cars and buses.
- In 2017, DOT constructed pedestrian safety islands between 105th and 114th streets, upgraded crosswalks and added LPIs at 110 St and 111th St.

- Following a walkthrough with elected officials, DOT this year installed Leading Pedestrian Intervals, which serve as head starts for pedestrians crossing Northern Boulevard, at every feasible intersection from Queens Plaza to 114th Street.
- DOT installed Left Turn Traffic Calming at 5 intersections from 82nd St to Junction Blvd in mid-June, and at 70th and 72nd Streets in July, along with the refurbishment of road markings on Northern from Queens Plaza–114th St in July.

"New Yorkers deserve to feel safe when walking within their communities," said **U.S. Rep. Joe Crowley**. "I applaud NYPD and DOT on their new efforts to make Vision Zero a reality, and I am glad they are actively engaging communities in Queens to ensure a safer Northern Boulevard for our children and seniors."

"No street in the City of New York should be known as the 'Boulevard of Death' and it is an unacceptable tragedy that this street has seen four fatalities this year alone," said **State Senator Michael Gianaris**. "This announcement is an important first step, but we have a long way to go to ensure pedestrians and drivers are safe on Northern Boulevard. I look forward to working with DOT, advocates, and the community to redesign this street the right way."

"Too many pedestrians have been injured or killed on this roadway," said **Assembly Member Michael DenDekker**. "I look forward to seeing plans to completely re-design Northern Boulevard with pedestrian safety as the number one priority."

"We cannot have one more death due to a traffic fatality," said **Council Member Ydanis Rodriguez, Chair of the Committee on Transportation**. "It is our job as government leaders that we collaborate to create pedestrian design solutions and safety measures to put an end to preventable traffic incidents. Thank you DOT Commissioner Trottenberg and NYPD officials for highlighting on Walk To School Day, that it is imperative we focus on the protection of pedestrians and cyclists to ensure a more walkable, bike-friendly and livable city."

"It is time for a complete overhaul of Northern Boulevard, the new 'Boulevard of Death,'" said **NYC Council Member Daniel Dromm**. "I am pleased to see that the administration is taking the concerns of Queens residents and transportation advocates seriously. I look forward to working with them to build a comprehensive safety plan for Northern Boulevard."

"The death toll along Northern Boulevard is simply unacceptable," **Council Member Francisco Moya** said. "With ten deaths along the 11-mile stretch since 2017, it's abundantly clear that this thoroughfare is indeed the new 'Boulevard of Death.' Thank you to the Department of Transportation Commissioner Polly Trottenberg and the mayor's office for taking this crisis seriously and implementing a similar process used to transform Queens Boulevard, which has recorded three straight years without a fatal pedestrian collision and saw a 35 percent reduction in injuries in 2017. I look forward to working with residents, the NYPD and the DOT to prevent another tragedy here."

"Northern Boulevard is the new 'Boulevard of Death' in Queens," said **Juan Restrepo, Queens Organizer for Transportation Alternatives**. "Instead of connecting its neighbors, it divides and frightens them, serving as a highway instead of a main street. Fortunately the New York City Department of Transportation has a record of making big, bold changes on streets like these. One needn't look any further than the improvements made on Queens Boulevard, where there have been zero deaths on the segments that were redesigned. We look forward to

working together with the City to make Northern Boulevard a safe, attractive multi-modal corridor that puts people first."

Under the Vision Zero initiative, New York City ended the first six months of 2018 with the fewest traffic fatalities ever measured in any six-month period. As of June 30th, the city had recorded 81 fatalities, the lowest ever in a six-month period, and only the second time that fewer than 100 lives had been lost in a half-year period. The Mayor also noted how the data continue to show New York City bucking national fatality trends. To date, the City is at 149 traffic fatalities, 26 fewer than at this time last year, and 65 fewer than at this time in 2013.

About Vision Zero:

Vision Zero is the de Blasio administration's initiative to use every tool at its disposal to end traffic deaths and injuries on New York City streets. In 2017, New York City experienced its safest year on record with the fourth straight year of fatality declines. Since the program's inaugural year in 2014, when New York City became the first American city to adopt Vision Zero, the city's traffic fatalities have declined 28 percent with a 45 percent decline in pedestrian fatalities — bucking national fatality trends, which have increased 15 percent over the same period.

For more information about the Vision Zero initiative, please see www.nyc.gov/visionzero.