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**VISION ZERO: AS CLASSROOMS RE-OPEN, MAYOR DE BLASIO ANNOUNCES
EXPANDED TRAFFIC SAFETY ENFORCEMENT NEAR SCHOOLS**

Increased police presence near schools to focus on failure to yield to pedestrians

After new DOT analysis, Mayor renews call on Albany to permit 24/7 speed camera operation

NEW YORK—As New York City public schools prepare to welcome students back on Monday, Mayor Bill de Blasio today announced increased traffic safety measures to keep children safe in school zones. NYPD will expand its traffic enforcement against reckless, aggressive and distracted driving, with a special focus on violations that endanger child pedestrians, including failure to yield in a crosswalk.

The Mayor also renewed New York City’s call for state lawmakers to allow 24/7 operation of its cameras, which are currently forbidden from operating overnight. The Department of Transportation’s (DOT) nation-leading speed camera program now includes over 1,400 cameras across 750 school zones.

“New York City schools have the most rigorous COVID-19 safety protocols in the country, but our mission isn’t complete until all facilities are safe from traffic violence, too,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “Thanks to the tireless public servants at DOT and NYPD, our schools will be safer than ever this year. Now it’s time to take the next step: Albany must allow us to operate our speed cameras overnight and hold dangerous drivers accountable, no matter when they break the law.”

“Our children are our most precious resource. As the city has been working tirelessly to ensure that classrooms are ready for their safe return, the NYPD is committed to making sure our roadways are safe for the return of all of our city’s students,” said **NYPD Chief of Transportation Kim Royster**. “This citywide enforcement initiative will be focused on holding drivers that speed — and drivers that fail to yield to pedestrians and cyclists — accountable.”

“School's back in session, and we're proud to be partnering with the NYPD to put drivers on notice – reckless driving and speeding are going to be met with stiff penalties,” said **DOT**

Commissioner Hank Gutman. "That said, we urgently need Albany to pass common sense legislation that allows our automated speed cams to operate 24/7, because lives are not only at risk when school is in session. I want to thank State Senator Andrew Gounardes and Assembly Member Deborah Glick for showing great leadership by sponsoring S5602/A6681, the bill allowing us to do just that."

"The school day starts as soon as our young people leave their homes, which is why the safety of our streets is so important," said **Schools Chancellor Meisha Porter.** "We are proud of the work our partners across the City are doing to ensure that children can safely walk to and from school for their first day back and every day after that."

"As we welcome students back to school, many of our city's streets will be busier than they have been in a long time," said **Health Commissioner Dave A. Chokshi.** "Traffic crashes can seriously injure children. Make sure to slow down and look out for cyclists and pedestrians, especially when turning. We all have a part to play in keeping our children safe."

"Vision Zero is critical now, more than ever. Pedestrians, especially children returning to school this month, need to be able to traverse our streets safely. We are counting on all New York City drivers to not speed and to follow traffic laws, including making slow turns," said **TLC Commissioner and Chair Aloysee Heredia Jarmoszuk.** "TLC-Licensed Drivers are the best in the business, and we continue to expect them to follow the highest safety standards and take all precautions to keep themselves, passengers, pedestrians and cyclists safe."

"As New York City's children return to school, the last thing our kids should contend with are speeding vehicles and careless drivers," said **NYC Chief Fleet Officer Keith Kerman.** "NYC operates a large municipal fleet and we are calling on all City employees to make September "Slowtember," to reduce speeds especially near school zones, and keep everyone safe."

A DOT [analysis](#) released today shows one-third of fatal crashes last year happened in school speed zones during overnight and weekend hours, when speed cameras are currently not allowed to operate. It found that 24/7 automated enforcement would increase the safety benefits the city is already seeing:

- As of December 2020, speeding at camera locations had dropped by an average of 72%.
- Speeding has declined 89% on the Grand Concourse in the Bronx and Union Turnpike in Queens, 88% on Fourth Avenue in Brooklyn, and over 80% on Rockaway Boulevard, Gun Hill Road, Coney Island Avenue, Eastern Parkway, Hylan Boulevard, and Northern Boulevard.
- Injuries have declined 14% on school speed zone corridors with cameras.

Back-to-School Awareness and Northern Boulevard Changes

Earlier today, NYPD and DOT street teams spread out across New York City to remind rush-hour drivers of students' return to school Monday, part of a combined and coordinated school-based effort this fall from NYPD's Community Affairs Bureau and DOT's Education & Outreach Unit.

Today's event was held along Northern Boulevard near PS 152 in Woodside, the site of a fatal crash that killed 8-year-old Noshat Nahian as he walked to school in December 2013 – and helped inspire New York City's adoption of Vision Zero. Major changes along Northern Boulevard in the last several years include new crosswalks, pedestrian refuge islands and head-starts, lower speed limits (from 30 MPH to 25 MPH) and newly installed speed cameras. The speed cameras along Northern Boulevard in Woodside have seen over 75% fewer speeding violations since these changes were made in July 2019.

NYPD Enforcement Plan

NYPD will increase vehicle safety enforcement all autumn, with a special focus on schools next week. The enforcement plan includes the following components:

- Officers on highways and local streets will have an increased focus on drivers who fail to yield to pedestrians and cyclists, speed with their vehicles, and drive recklessly in the vicinity of schools. Failure to yield at intersections has been a cause in over 60% of pedestrian fatalities in 2021.
- This multifaceted approach will also target drunk drivers. Motorists who drive while impaired will be arrested and their vehicles impounded.
- Additional officers will be dedicated to the enforcement of texting while driving and illegal cell phone use.
- Additional highway officers will enforce speed regulations.
- Motorcycle safety will be prioritized, not only by enforcement against reckless motorcyclists, but also against dangerous driving by other vehicles which cause risks to motorcycles.

“Traffic collisions remain one of the worst and most preventable causes of death in New York City,” said **Senator Andrew Gounardes**. “As our children prepare to return to in-person learning, it's especially important that we expand traffic enforcement and continue to take steps to build on the life-saving School Zone Speed Camera Program by allowing 24/7 operations of these cameras. To work towards a future where no family ever loses a child to traffic violence, we must act with urgency to pass my bill, S5602, to bolster camera enforcement and make sure that speeding motorists no longer put our schoolchildren in unnecessary danger.”

“School zone speed cameras are one of the best tools available to keep students and school staff safe from speeding motorists. In 2013, I worked aggressively to enact the original demonstration program, and in 2019 I successfully pushed for a significant enhancement to the program to bring speed cameras to more school zones. I am heartened that cameras are now monitoring school zones for dangerous drivers across New York City, but we have more work to do. I look forward to pushing for the next step in protecting our students by passing my bill to allow cameras to protect our streets 24/7 in the upcoming legislative session,” said **Assembly Member Deborah J. Glick**.

“Schools should be havens for our communities and yet one-third of motor vehicle collision deaths are in school zones in our city. In my Assembly district, we have suffered from the

consequences of reckless driving and in 2012, Miguel Torres, an 11-year-old boy was killed when hit by a truck across the street from where I live. No family should ever have to suffer these losses” said **Assembly Member Jessica González-Rojas**. “That is why we must act. I’m a co-sponsor of legislation by my colleague, Assemblywoman Deborah Glick, and State Senator Andrew Gounardes that would allow for 24/7 speed cameras. I will be joining them in pushing for its passage and ask our colleagues to do the same. Our communities’ safety must be our priority.”

"For the first time in almost 2 years, our students are returning to their classrooms, some of them for the very first time. Traffic enforcement will be key to keeping our students, parents, and teachers safe. Studies have shown that speed cameras are effective deterrents against reckless and dangerous drivers. Our City’s speed camera program is one of the best in the nation with over 1,400 cameras operating in 750 school zones across our City. However, these speed cameras only operate between the hours of 6am to 10pm. I support the call to push for the passage of two state bills that would permit speed enforcement 24/7, S5602 and A6681 sponsored by Senator Andrew Gounardes and Assembly Member, Deborah Glick,” said **Council Member Ydanis Rodriguez, Chairman of the Transportation Committee**. “I also believe that the City should be empowered and have control of everything relating to transportation in New York City including our speed cameras. I will continue to work with my colleagues at the Council, advocates, Mayor de Blasio, Speaker Corey Johnson, DOT, and the NYPD to ensure we keep our children safe.”

“With the new school year approaching, our students, families, teachers, and staff must be safe in and around our school buildings,” said **Council Member Adrienne Adams**. “This increased focus on enforcing rules against aggressive and reckless driving, especially in school zones, is truly necessary to keep our communities safe.”

"Many students are finally returning to in-person learning following the COVID-19 pandemic. The last thing that children and parents need is to worry about reckless drivers causing injuries and deaths on streets around schools," said **Liam Blank, a spokesperson for Tri-State Transportation Campaign**. "Automated speed cameras have proven to reduce traffic fatalities during school hours, and now we are calling on the State to pass legislation that allows speed cameras in 750 school zones across New York City to be operational 24/7."

“No parent should face the pain of losing a child to preventable traffic violence,” said **Amy Cohen, co-founder of Families for Safe Streets**. “In a year of record-breaking deaths on our streets, we need Albany to pass the entire Crash Victim Rights and Safety Act, which includes a 24/7 expansion of the speed safety camera program. This legislation will save lives and we are proud that it has the full support of Mayor de Blasio. We believe it will also be more effective when coupled with Vision Zero street redesigns, like those near PS 152 in Woodside and in other locations across the city.”

“StreetsPAC fully supports Mayor de Blasio’s efforts to expand operation of the city’s life-saving speed cameras, and we join him in urging state officials to remove all time and day restrictions on cameras. A large share of the most dangerous and devastating crashes occur overnight and on weekends, and there’s no reasonable rationale for turning cameras off during

those times. Governor Hochul, Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins, and Speaker Heastie must grant the city the authority to operate speed cameras 24/7/365. We also welcome design changes that will help make Northern Boulevard safer, and while we wish New York City’s drivers didn’t need to be reminded to drive safely and responsibly around schools – or anywhere else, for that matter – we’re glad to see NYPD and DOT focusing on keeping students safe,” said **Eric McClure, Executive Director at StreetsPAC.**

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