



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF CHICAGO

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 12, 2017

CONTACT:

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

press@cityofchicago.org

**MAYOR EMANUEL UNVEILS VISION ZERO ACTION PLAN DESIGNED
TO ELIMINATE TRAFFIC FATALITIES AND SERIOUS INJURIES ACROSS CHICAGO**

Interdepartmental effort addresses traffic safety as a public health and equity issue; will engage community residents and coordinate efforts to increase roadway safety for all

Mayor Emanuel today announced the City of Chicago is intensifying its efforts at saving lives and preventing serious injuries through a three-year Vision Zero Chicago Action Plan. The data-driven, multi-agency approach looks at traffic safety as a public health challenge and is designed to improve traffic safety for all road users. The ultimate goal of Vision Zero is to reduce roadway crashes and eliminate traffic fatalities and serious injuries in Chicago by 2026.

"Chicago has made progress in making our streets safer, but we still experience far too many traffic crashes. The status quo is unacceptable," Mayor Emanuel said. "We will streamline our efforts to protect the lives, health and well-being of all Chicagoans."

The Mayor made the announcement today alongside Alderman Emma Mitts (37th) at the site of a pedestrian refuge island installed at Chicago Avenue and Lamon Avenue as a part of a Safe Routes to School infrastructure project.

"I am happy that Mayor Emanuel launched the Vision Zero Action plan in the 37th Ward," said Alderman Mitts. "We will do everything we can to spread the message of Vision Zero and save lives."

At the direction of Mayor Emanuel, a dozen City departments and agencies have been working for months with traffic safety stakeholders to develop the Vision Zero Action plan. The plan covers the first three years of the effort, which is based on the principles of the international Vision Zero movement. It incorporates traffic crash data, identifies the greatest opportunities for change, and establishes the City's priorities and resources for addressing this public health challenge.

The planning process was coordinated by the Mayor's Office and led by the Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT), the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) and the Chicago Police Department (CPD).

"Vision Zero Chicago is not a top down City initiative, but a starting point for a broad partnership that will tackle the public health crisis that affects the lives and wellbeing of Chicagoans every

121 NORTH LASALLE STREET, ROOM 507, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60602

single day,” CDOT Commissioner Rebekah Scheinfeld said. “The Vision Zero Action Plan identifies City resources and spells out detailed strategies for how we are going to work with stakeholders to achieve the ultimate goal of saving lives and eliminating serious and fatal traffic crashes.”

While Chicago and the nation have seen a downward trend in traffic crashes over the last decade, this downward trend has leveled off in recent years. More than 2,000 people are killed or seriously injured in traffic crashes in Chicago each year, with an average of five people seriously injured each day and one person killed every three days.

CDOT has long-used crash data in planning engineering improvements, but this process will be strengthened under Vision Zero.

As part of the planning for Vision Zero Chicago, the City has used crash data to identify 43 High Crash Corridors and eight High Crash Areas. Of the High Crash Areas, seven of the eight are on the West and South Side of the city, with the remainder being downtown where the higher crash rate is correlated with higher density and higher volumes of vehicles and pedestrians. In addition, the data shows that people who live in areas of high economic hardship are three times as likely to die as a result of a traffic crash.

“Traffic crashes are not only a transportation concern, but a public health issue,” Commissioner of Public Health Julie Morita, M.D. said. “Vision Zero builds on our Healthy Chicago 2.0 plan to invest in our most affected neighborhoods. CDPH is committed to working with our City and community partners to ensure that our transportation systems guarantee the safety of motorists and pedestrians which will ultimately save lives.

"Achieving the goals that are part of the Vision Zero initiative will go a long way in making Chicago safer," said CPD Superintendent Eddie Johnson. "Working with our partners in city agencies and with community residents, we will engage in appropriate enforcement efforts in the areas that have presented historical challenges with traffic related injuries and fatalities."

Police efforts under Vision Zero will be focused on education and engagement events in High Crash Areas and Corridors. While enforcement is an important and effective tool in preventing dangerous driving behaviors, CPD will work in partnership with communities and residents to ensure that all traffic safety interventions are fair and focused appropriately.

The Vision Zero Action Plan lays out four key goals and specific strategies to achieve these goals:

1. Invest in communities that are most affected by severe traffic crashes.
2. Work to change behaviors and perceptions to build a culture of a safety.
3. Make streets safer for all users.
4. Encourage and implement policies, training and technologies that create safer vehicles and safer professional drivers.

Communities most heavily affected by severe traffic crashes will be prioritized for outreach and education, starting with a pilot project this summer on the West Side in Garfield Park and Austin, funded by an \$185,000 grant from the National Safety Council.

Under the three year plan, CDOT is committed to improving 300 intersections to make them safer for pedestrians, who are the most vulnerable roadway users. CDOT will also work with the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) to improve access and safety at 25 transit stations, encouraging the use of transit through targeted safety improvements in the vicinity of CTA stations and bus stops, particularly in high crash zones.

Vision Zero will also implement policies, training and technologies that create safer vehicles and safer professional drivers throughout the City, including with drivers in the City's fleet of vehicles as well as taxi and transportation network provider drivers.

The City will lead by example through the installation of low-cost, life-saving equipment on large trucks in the City fleet. The City will phase in the installation of sideguards and convex mirrors on its large trucks. It will also propose an ordinance that will require City contractors to make these same safety improvements on their large trucks.

The announcement of the plan was hailed by traffic safety stakeholders.

"Older individuals – in Chicago as well as across the nation – are disproportionately affected when it comes to vehicular and pedestrian fatalities," said AARP Illinois State President Rosanna Marquez, who was also the victim of a reckless driver while trying to cross a street in Chicago's Loop. "With Vision Zero, the City of Chicago, stakeholders, advocates, and community leaders can work together to ensure individuals of all ages can get around safely across town, and to engage and educate the public to eliminate dangerous behaviors, save lives, and prevent serious injuries. We are committed to working with the City and all stakeholders to help make sure Vision Zero reaches its Chicago goals by 2026."

"The Vision Zero Action Plan lays a strong foundation for making real progress on saving lives and preventing serious injuries on our streets," said Active Transportation Alliance Executive Director Ron Burke. "We look forward to continuing to work with city and community partners to ensure the plan is fully implemented and we stay on track to meet its ambitious goals."

Vision Zero Chicago involves the coordinated efforts of 11 City departments working at the direction of the Mayor's Office. Chicago was named one of 10 Focus Cities in the U.S. in 2016 and asked to participate in a new national program designed to advance Vision Zero. The approach recognizes that the challenges and opportunities to improve safe mobility are similar across cities. By collaborating closely with other Focus Cities, Chicago we will be part of a national effort to develop and share best practices aimed at eliminating traffic fatalities and severe injuries caused by traffic crashes.

To view the full Vision Zero Action plan, go to <http://visionzerochicago.org/>

Participating City Departments & Agencies

Office of the Mayor
Chicago Department of Transportation
Chicago Department of Public Health
Chicago Police Department
Chicago Transit Authority
Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection
Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events
Office of Emergency Management and Communication
Department of Fleet and Facility Management
Chicago Fire Department
Department of Innovation and Technology
Chicago Public Schools

###