2014 NYPD Report Card: Year One of Vision Zero Traffic Enforcement
Published February 2015

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2014, nearly every precinct in the New York City Police Department made progress toward Vision Zero by increasing overall summonsing of the most dangerous violations. However, in certain precincts, enforcement of some specific dangerous violations declined. Injuries caused by traffic are on the rise in certain precincts, and in some areas of the city, traffic fatalities are outpacing murders.

Enforcement is a central element of achieving Mayor Bill de Blasio’s goal of Vision Zero for New York City – to eliminate traffic fatalities and serious injuries by 2024. This is a tall order for the New York City Police Department and in 2014 overall, NYPD officers rose to the challenge, working hard to reduce traffic fatalities and injuries.

Transportation Alternatives’ 2014 NYPD Report Card: Year One of Vision Zero Traffic Enforcement looks at the NYPD's citywide enforcement of the most dangerous traffic violations, speeding and failure to yield to pedestrians, in 2014 as compared to the previous year.

The report finds that every NYPD precinct made progress toward Vision Zero by increasing overall summonsing of the most dangerous violations. In 2014:

- **The 70th Precinct performed particularly well**, issuing 310 more speeding summonses and 832 more failure to yield summonses, and seeing 33 fewer pedestrian and bicycle injuries than the prior year.
- **All ten precincts in the Manhattan South Borough Command performed well**, collectively issuing 747 more summonses for speeding and 2,312 more summonses for failure to yield, and seeing 233 fewer bicycle and pedestrian injuries than the prior year.

However, not all precincts have been up to the task. In 2014:

- **The 94th Precinct wrote fewer speeding summonses** and saw a five percent increase in bicycle and pedestrian injuries from the prior year.
- **The 100th Precinct only wrote 42 failure to yield summonses**, less than one per week, and saw an 11 percent increase in cyclist and pedestrian injuries from the prior year.

If New York City is going to reach Mayor de Blasio’s goal of Vision Zero, the NYPD must fully participate. To reduce traffic fatalities and serious injuries on New York City streets, the NYPD needs to:

- Educate all police officers on the importance of traffic safety through Police Academy training, at roll calls and at Traffic Stat.
- Publish complete traffic enforcement and crash data that can be easily analyzed so all New Yorkers can better understand the pervasiveness of traffic violence on city streets.
- Use data to drive traffic enforcement, focusing on the violations and locations most likely to kill and injure pedestrians and cyclists.
- Enforce New York City’s new Right-of-Way Law to send a clear message that drivers who fail to yield will be held accountable.
THE PROBLEM

Traffic Fatalities: Outpacing Murders
Some Borough Commands now see traffic fatality rates that are higher than murder rates. In 2014:

- In Brooklyn South, Manhattan South, and Queens North Borough Commands more people were killed in motor vehicle crashes than were murdered.
- In Manhattan South and Queens North Borough Commands, pedestrian and cyclist fatalities alone outpaced murders.

Pedestrian Injuries: On the Rise in Some Precincts
Citywide, there has been an eight percent decrease in pedestrian injuries, with almost every precinct reducing pedestrian injuries, but some precincts have actually seen an increase in pedestrian injuries. In 2014:

- 16 precincts saw an increase in pedestrian injuries.
- Pedestrian injuries increased in the 14th, 23rd, 45th, 46th, 49th, 50th, 60th, 61st, 62nd, 68th, 79th, 81st, 100th, 102nd, 112th, and 114th precincts.

Cyclist Injuries: Not Dropping Fast Enough
Citywide, injuries to cyclists have not decreased at the same rate as pedestrian injuries. In 2014:

- Cyclist injuries decreased by only three percent across the city.
- Half of the precincts saw an increase in cyclist injuries.

Driver Choices: Still Dangerous
The majority of traffic crashes that kill or maim pedestrians and cyclists are caused by drivers making dangerous choices and committing enforceable moving violations. In 2014:

- Speeding remained the most deadly traffic violation in New York City.
- Drivers who fail to yield remained the leading cause of injury to pedestrians.
The Best and Worst Precincts

Without consistent enforcement to deter drivers from offenses most likely to kill and maim, we cannot reduce fatalities and serious injuries in New York City. When compared to other precincts within the same borough command, the NYPD precincts below showed the most and least improvement in enforcement of the most dangerous traffic violations in 2014. Each of these precincts (with the exception of the 100th and Central Park Precincts) contains at least one corridor or zone that has been identified by DOT as particularly dangerous for pedestrians (see Appendix C) 5, further underscoring the need for safety enforcement in these areas.

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<td>Speeding – 44th Precinct</td>
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<td>Failure to Yield – 41st Precinct</td>
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BROOKLYN SOUTH

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<td>Failure to Yield – 70th Precinct</td>
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MANHATTAN SOUTH

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<td>Failure to Yield – 14th Precinct</td>
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<td>Failure to Yield – Central Park Precinct</td>
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QUEENS SOUTH

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<td>Speeding – 110th Precinct</td>
<td>Speeding – 108th Precinct</td>
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<tr>
<td>Failure to Yield – 110th Precinct</td>
<td>Failure to Yield – 114th Precinct</td>
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STATEN ISLAND

The 121st Precinct was created in November 2013 out of areas that were the 120th and 122nd precincts. This makes comparison from 2013 to 2014 difficult for the whole borough. Combined, the 120th, 121st and 122nd precincts increased speeding summonses 81 percent from 2013, while the 123rd Precinct increased speeding summonses by 46 percent. The 120th, 121st and 122nd precincts together increased failure to yield summonses 191 percent from 2013. The 123rd Precinct increased from an abysmal 4 failure to yield to yield summonses in 2013, to 14 in 2014.

ALL BOROUGH COMMANDS

Across all borough commands, in 2014, the Bronx Borough Command had the largest increase in failure to yield summonses (a 278 percent increase from 2013), while the Manhattan South Borough Command had the largest increase in speeding summonses (a 157 percent increase from 2013).
Inconsistencies Undermine Efforts

Right now, the greatest deterrent to the NYPD’s success in reaching Vision Zero is citywide inconsistency.

While some NYPD precincts are striving for increased traffic enforcement, the enforcement of the most dangerous violations, speeding and failure to yield, remains low in many precincts (see Appendix A: Summonses). New York City’s new Right-of-Way Law, which allows the NYPD to charge a driver who strikes a pedestrian or cyclist with a misdemeanor, has been enforced inconsistently because it is currently only used by one team of officers, the Collision Investigation Squad. 6

Stark inconsistency undermines any positive deterrent effects of enforcement. Neighboring precincts continue to see wide disparities in enforcement. In Queens, the 110th Precinct issued 1,492 more summonses than last year, while the neighboring 109th Precinct issued only 532 more summonses. In Brooklyn, the 88th Precinct issued 105 percent more summonses for speeding than last year, while the neighboring 90th precinct issued only 2 percent more, and the nearby 94th precinct issued 2 percent fewer than last year.

Varying levels of enforcement reinforces a mentality among drivers that they can “get away with it,” or that if they are summonsed, it is “bad luck,” rather than part of a larger effort by the NYPD to enforce traffic laws. Every violation that goes unenforced is implicit encouragement for drivers to commit the violation again.

Right-of-Way Law

In August 2014, a new “Right-of-Way Law,” New York City Law 19-190, went into effect. This new law empowers NYPD officers to enforce criminal penalties for reckless driving in cases where a pedestrian or cyclist is killed or injured when they have the right of way. The Right-of-Way Law has the potential to advance Vision Zero by encouraging drivers to yield to pedestrians and cyclists, but it will only be effective if the NYPD educates officers on how and when to enforce it, and encourages its widespread use.

Speeding

In November 2014, New York City’s default speed limit was reduced to 25 mph. When coupled with increased enforcement, the lower speed limit is an important step toward Vision Zero. While overall precinct enforcement of the speed limit increased citywide by 77 percent in 2014, some precincts issued fewer speeding summonses than the prior year, and many issued less than one per day, with some precincts only issuing one per week. And though the vast majority of pedestrian and cyclist injuries and fatalities occur on local city streets, highway patrol continues to issue the majority of speeding summonses. Last year, the NYPD’s Transportation Bureau issued nearly twice as many speeding summonses on highways as precincts did on our deadly local streets, which does little to protect the people most likely to die - cyclists and pedestrians.

Failure to Yield

The danger of drivers failing to yield the right-of-way made headlines in 2014 after a series of high-profile crashes that killed children. While enforcement of failure to yield laws increased by 117 percent citywide in 2014 (see Appendix B: Failure to Yield and Pedestrian Injuries), few precincts issued enough summonses to adequately protect pedestrians, who are often struck while crossing in a crosswalk with a walk signal. In 2014, many precincts issued only one failure to yield summons per day. In Manhattan, the 14th Precinct issued 744 more failure to yield summonses than the previous year, while the neighboring 13th Precinct issued a mere 118 more.
Image 1: Map of the most improved and least improved precincts in each Borough Command for speeding summonses, January to December 2013 versus 2014.

Image 2: Map of the most improved and least improved precincts in each Borough Command for failure to yield summonses, January to December 2013 versus 2014.
**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Simply put, traffic enforcement works. Drivers who receive a summons are less likely to kill or seriously injure someone in the future.⁸ This is why the NYPD is critical to achieving Vision Zero.

While continuing to increase enforcement of the most dangerous violations is an important first step, **consistent enforcement of these deadly behaviors is paramount**. In order to more effectively deter drivers from dangerous behavior, the NYPD must coordinate enforcement citywide so the likelihood of punishment for reckless driving is consistent, no matter where a driver is in the city.

To that end, Transportation Alternatives recommends that the NYPD:

1. **Focus Enforcement:**
   - On the most dangerous violations - failure to yield and speeding.
   - In the most dangerous locations - arterial streets, which despite making up just 15 percent of New York City streets are the location of more than half of all pedestrian and cyclist fatalities.⁹

2. **Empower Officers with Training and Education:**
   - By integrating New York City’s new Right-of-Way Law (19-190) into Traffic Stat, and encouraging officers to issue this violation to all drivers who fail to yield to pedestrians or cyclists. The Department should also measure the efficiency of this enforcement as it is rolled out to all precincts.
   - To underscore the importance of Vision Zero, by including the experiences of families impacted by traffic violence in officer training at the Police Academy and at roll call for current officers.

3. **Remain Accountable to Vision Zero by Publishing Better Data:**
   - By expanding the NYPD’s online publication of crashes to include causes of injury, injury severity, and whether or not CIS was called to the scene. The City also needs to ensure that all crashes have a geo-coded location to help identify the most dangerous locations and violations.
   - Through publishing more accessible reports of traffic summonses, in machine-readable precinct-disaggregated format, as required by New York City law.¹⁰
METHODOLOGY

This 2014 NYPD Report Card evaluates how individual precincts have performed from January to December 2014 in summoning the most dangerous (most likely to kill or severely injure) traffic violations (speeding and failure to yield) when compared to 2013, and compared to their peers.

The NYPD’s 76 precincts are grouped into eight Patrol Borough Commands: Manhattan North, Manhattan South, Brooklyn North, Brooklyn South, Queens North, Queens South, Bronx and Staten Island. Patrol Borough Commands group precincts into geographic areas; precincts in the same Borough Command have a more similar makeup when compared to others around the city, which facilitates a more accurate comparison between the precincts therein. By comparing precincts’ improvement (or failure to improve) in summoning to the median improvement among precincts in their borough command, a clear picture arises of the best and the worst traffic violation enforcers in the city.

The Report Card also evaluates data for pedestrian and bicycle injuries as a measure of safety trends for street users. Pedestrian and bicycle fatality data, while important, are less reliable as indicators of trends because of their smaller sample size.
APPENDIX A: SUMMONSES

The number of speeding and failure to yield summonses issued by NYPD precinct, 2013-2014:

Manhattan South Borough Command

Manhattan North Borough Command
The number of failure to yield summonses and pedestrian injuries citywide, 2013-2014
APPENDIX C: DOT PRIORITY CORRIDORS

NYC Department of Transportation Pedestrian Safety Action Plan Priority Zones and Corridors in precincts with the best and worst improvement in summoning.

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<th>BOROUGH</th>
<th>PRECINCT</th>
<th>DOT PRIORITY AREAS AND CORRIDORS</th>
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<td>BRONX</td>
<td>BEST</td>
<td>Speeding – 44&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; Precinct</td>
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<td><em>Partial Priority Area.</em></td>
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<td><em>Priority Corridors:</em> University Ave, Grand Concourse, 170&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; St, 167&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; St, 165&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; St, 161&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; St</td>
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<td>Failure to Yield – 41&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; Precinct</td>
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<td><em>Partial Priority Area.</em></td>
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<td><em>Priority Corridors:</em> Hunts Point Avenue, Bruckner Boulevard</td>
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<td>WORST</td>
<td>Speeding – 48&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; Precinct</td>
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<td><em>Almost entirely a Priority Area.</em></td>
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<td><em>Priority Corridors:</em> Fordham Rd, 180&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; St, Tremont Ave, Morris Park Ave, 3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt; Ave, Crotona Ave, Southern Blvd</td>
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<td>Failure to Yield – 42&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; Precinct</td>
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<td><em>Partial Priority Area.</em></td>
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<td><em>Priority Corridors:</em> Prospect Avenue, Crotona Ave, Southern Blvd, 167&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; St, 165&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; St, 161&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; St</td>
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<td>BROOKLYN SOUTH</td>
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<td><em>Priority Corridors:</em> Church Ave., Rogers Ave, Utica Ave, Nostrand Ave, Ralph Ave</td>
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<td>Failure to Yield– 70&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; Precinct</td>
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<td><em>Partial Priority Area.</em></td>
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<td><em>Priority Corridors:</em> Church Ave, Flatbush Ave, Coney Island Ave, Ave M, Nostrand Ave, Ocean Pkwy</td>
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<td>WORST</td>
<td>Speeding – 69&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; Precinct</td>
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<td><em>Priority Corridors:</em> Rockaway Pkwy, Rockaway Ave, Ralph Ave</td>
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<td>Failure to Yield – 69&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; Precinct</td>
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<td>BROOKLYN NORTH</td>
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<td>Speeding – 77&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; Precinct</td>
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<td><em>Entirely a Priority Area.</em></td>
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<td><em>Priority Corridors:</em> Classon Ave, Franklin Ave, Rogers Ave, Nostrand Ave, Ralph Ave, Pitkin Ave, Kingston Ave, Troy Ave, Schnectady Ave, Rochester Ave, Atlantic Ave</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Failure to Yield – 79&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; Precinct</td>
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<td><em>Partial Priority Corridor.</em></td>
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<td><em>Priority Corridors:</em> Flushing Ave, Myrtle Ave, Fulton Ave, Atlantic Ave, Classon Ave, Franklin Ave, Nostrand Ave, Marcus Garvey Blvd</td>
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</table>
WORST
Speeding – 94th Precinct

Failure to Yield – 73rd Precinct

Priority Corridors: Graham Ave

MANHATTAN SOUTH

BEST
Speeding – 14th Precinct

Failure to Yield – 14th Precinct

Entirely a Priority Area.
Priority Corridors: 9th Ave, 8th Ave, 7th Ave, 6th Ave, 42nd St, 34th St

WORST
Speeding – 10th Precinct

Failure to Yield – 9th Precinct

Priority Corridors: 14th St, Houston St, 3rd Ave, 2nd Ave, 1st Ave

MANHATTAN NORTH

BEST
Speeding – 26th Precinct

Failure to Yield - Central Park Precinct

Priority Corridors: Broadway, 125th Street

WORST
Speeding – 30th Precinct

Failure to Yield – 34th Precinct

Priority Corridors: Broadway

QUEENS SOUTH

BEST
Speeding – 101st Precinct

Failure to Yield – 103rd Precinct

Partial Priority Area.
Priority Corridors: Metropolitan Ave, Grand Ave, Myrtle Ave, Fresh Pond Rd, Forest Ave, Seneca Ave, Grove St, Palmetto St

WORST
Speeding – 106th Precinct

Failure to Yield – 100th Precinct

Partial Priority Area.
Priority Corridors: Hillside Ave, Archer Ave, South Rd, 160th St, Sutphin Blvd, Guy Brewer Blvd, Merrick Blvd

Priority Corridors: 104th St, Woodhaven Blvd

No Priority Areas or Corridors.
QUEENS NORTH

BEST
Speeding – 110th Precinct

*Partial Priority Area.*

*Priority Corridors:* Roosevelt Ave, Corona Ave, Queens Blvd, Broadway, 108th St, 111th St, Junction Blvd

Failure to Yield – 110th Precinct

*See above.*

WORST
Speeding – 108th Precinct

*Partial Priority Area.*

*Priority Corridors:* 23rd St, Queens Blvd, Roosevelt Ave

Failure to Yield – 114th Precinct

*Priority Corridors:* 23rd St, 34th Ave, Broadway, Northern Blvd

STATEN ISLAND

The 121st Precinct was created in 2013, so we did not compare Staten Island borough commands for FTY and speeding enforcement. All precincts in Staten Island have identified dangerous priority corridors. Priority areas and corridors are concentrated in precincts 120 and 122, with the majority covering Northern Staten Island.
REFERENCES