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Contacts: Kathleen Ferrier, kathleen@visionzeronetwork.org
Leah Shahum, leah@visionzeronetwork.org

Rx for Saving 10,000 Lives Annually:

NTSB Study Calls for Urgent Action to Stem Epidemic of Traumatic Injury Caused by Speeding Motorists

Recommendations Urge Reform of Speed Management Policies to Curb Major Public Safety Threat

Vision Zero Communities are Stepping Up to Fill Leadership Void in Managing Speed, Saving Lives

WASHINGTON, D.C. (July 25, 2017) – Local communities across the U.S. lauded recommendations issued today by the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) to dramatically reduce speed-related deaths and injuries and urgently raise public understanding of the deadly toll this under-addressed problem is taking nationwide.

NTSB, the nation's leading authority on crashes and prevention strategies, called for stepped-up national leadership and modernization of speed practices, including a multi-modal approach to set speed limits and use of proven technologies such as automated speed enforcement, among other effective countermeasures championed by a growing number of Vision Zero communities.

"For too long, proven policies to reduce speeding in our communities have been held hostage by outdated standards, costing more than 10,000 lives lost each year," said Leah Shahum, Director of the national Vision Zero Network, a nonprofit promoting the goal of eliminating traffic fatalities and severe injuries. "The responsibility to prioritize safety over speed falls not just on a driver's behavior, but also on our policymakers and government institutions that have let this problem fester too long. We urge every state and community to adopt NTSB's recommendations to stem the tide of preventable suffering on our roadways."

Specific recommendations in the NTSB speed study include the following:

- Encourage states and localities to authorize use automated speed enforcement, which is proven to be effective in managing speed, saving lives.
- Revise traditional speed-setting standards to balance 85 percentile approaches with safe systems approach that better incorporates crash history, safety of pedestrians, bicyclists.
- Incentivize state and local speed management activities.
- Incorporate the safe system approach for urban roads to strengthen protection for vulnerable road users.
- Increase federal attention, leadership and funding of speed as a national safety priority.

NTSB identified dangerous speeds as an underappreciated problem even though it poses one of the greatest threats to public safety. More than 112,000 people died in speeding-related crashes in the US from 2005 to 2014, averaging over 10,000 deaths annually.

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This is on par with the number of drunk driving fatalities during the same time period, NTSB reported, yet receives far less attention. The impacts of speeding also come with an economic cost estimated at \$52 billion in 2014, compared to \$44 billion in losses from drunk driving, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

In 2011, Judy Yu, now 66, suffered severe brain damage when she was hit by a speeding car while walking in a crosswalk in San Francisco, a Vision Zero city working to manage speeds. “Every day is a struggle for my mom physically, mentally and emotionally, and it is a daily challenge for my siblings and I to tend to her every need,” said her daughter Jenny Po Wah Yu. “Our government leaders say safety is their number one priority. They must make good on that pledge by taking action now to ensure our roadways are safe.”

Many local leaders and community members are stepping up to fill what the study identifies as a national leadership void on managing speed. More than 20 U.S. cities have committed to the goal of Vision Zero — zero traffic deaths and severe injuries — and are focusing on managing speeds, a top predictor of injury severity. Unfortunately, outdated standards and restrictive policies are limiting the ability of cities to prioritize safety over speed.

Local leadership to prioritize safety over speed is essential given that local roads bear the disproportionate brunt of traffic deaths. In 2014 the speeding-related fatality rate on local roads was 3.8 deaths per billion vehicle miles traveled, compared to freeways at 1.2 deaths per billion VMT, according to NTSB. Yet, as the study calls out, local authorities are often blocked from implementing proven traffic safety strategies – including improved roadway design, lower speed limits, and safety cameras.

The promising news is that communities that *have* implemented speed management strategies are seeing successful results in safer travel and lives saved. New York City has experienced a 23 percent reduction in roadway fatalities in the past three years since adopting Vision Zero and implementing lower speed limits and speed cameras, according to NYC Department of Transportation.

Montgomery County, Maryland installed speed cameras in 2007 that have reduced by 59% the likelihood of a driver exceeding the speed limit by more than 10mph and a 19% drop in the likelihood of crashes resulting in fatalities or incapacitating injuries, according to a study by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety. The study estimates that if all U.S. communities had speed camera programs like Montgomery County, more than 22,000 fatal or incapacitating injuries would have been prevented on 25-35 mph roads nationwide in 2015.

“We know what works to improve safety on our roadways,” said Shahum. “This study should be a wake-up call to enable local communities to manage speeds on their streets and save lives.”

Read more about the NTSB study, reactions from across the nation, and additional examples of communities’ efforts and successes at managing speed at <http://visionzeronetwork.org/safety-over-speed/>

A summary of today’s NTSB Board meeting, including statements and presentations, can be found at <https://www.nts.gov/news/events/Pages/2017-DCA15SS002.aspx>

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