

**Remarks Prepared for
David Friedman, Acting Administrator
National Highway Traffic Safety Administrator
Press Event with NYC Officials on Pedestrian Safety
Friday, April 25, 2014**

Good morning and thank you to Commissioner Trottenberg, Chief Chan, and the members of the City Council who have joined us today.

It's great to be here at the Crossroads of the World talking about how New York City can help lead the world in protecting pedestrians.

I want to congratulate New York for qualifying for these pedestrian safety funds. You face serious challenges when it comes to pedestrian safety and this cooperative agreement pays tribute to both the state and city's commitment to a safer, more walkable city. This grant will help New York City continue to reduce the number of pedestrian fatalities and injuries.

And it comes at an important time. Americans are increasingly voting with their feet—by walking, running, and cycling—as a way to get to work, school, or to stay in shape.

Regrettably, we've also seen a jump in U.S. fatalities and injuries among pedestrians and cyclists.

Pedestrian fatalities were up more than 6 percent in 2012, reaching 4,743 lives lost in that year alone.

That's one pedestrian's life lost every two hours.

Injuries were also up 10 percent in 2012, leading to one pedestrian injury every seven minutes.

Cyclist fatalities and injuries were up too.

I believe there are four key components to improving safety for pedestrians and cyclists.

First, it begins with personal responsibility. We know that we all take risks as drivers, pedestrians, and cyclists that we just shouldn't take.

As drivers we're sometimes in a rush and we don't keep our eyes out for pedestrians and cyclists in crosswalks—or we rush to get into those crosswalks before they do.

As pedestrians, we don't always use those crosswalks or make sure drivers see us before we step into traffic. And we walk while texting, not aware of traffic around us.

That all needs to change.

After all, two tons of metal, glass, and plastic can and will do irreparable harm to flesh and bone.

To provide a refresher on the rules of the road, NHTSA along with our colleagues at the Federal Highway Administration launched “Everyone is a Pedestrian,” an educational initiative and accompanying web site with tips and resources to help walkers stay safe.

Second, we need to provide infrastructure that reflects Americans’ changing approach to mobility. We need to provide safe spaces for bikes and pedestrians as well as cars.

We also need to recognize that many people cannot or choose not to drive and need safe and convenient transportation options, such as connections to transit.

Third, we also need to make good use of available vehicle technology. As one example, NHTSA recently issued our final rule mandating rear visibility cameras, which will help protect pedestrians.

On average, there are 210 fatalities and 15,000 injuries each year caused by backover crashes, the majority of whom are children younger than age 5 and seniors over age 70. Rear visibility cameras can help save lives and prevent those injuries and they will now be mandatory on all new vehicles beginning in 2018.

Fourth, and finally, we need tougher enforcement.

We know that when we tie education and enforcement we can change attitudes about unsafe behaviors and save lives.

If we want drivers to yield to pedestrians, pedestrians to use crosswalks and stay visible, and cyclists to obey traffic rules, then they all need to know that failing to follow the law will result in a ticket. That is a proven way to protect all roadway users.

Americans are choosing transportation alternatives. Our attitudes, our infrastructure, our technology and the law need to change to reflect how Americans choose to live today.

I’m proud to see that New York City is looking to take the lead on pedestrian safety, as illustrated by installing new roadway safety improvements and by the enforcement and education actions they’ll undertake with these funds.

Congratulations again to New York and I look forward to seeing the results of the many steps you are taking to protect pedestrians, both on your own and with our help.

Thank you.