



The New York Times | <http://nyti.ms/1EP8ReR>

N.Y. / REGION

New York City's Pedestrian Fatalities Lowest on Record in 2014

By **EMMA G. FITZSIMMONS** JAN. 1, 2015

Pedestrian deaths in New York City fell to a historic low last year after a push by the city to make streets less dangerous.

In 2014, 132 pedestrians died in traffic accidents, the lowest total for a year since the city began keeping records a century ago, officials said. There were 180 pedestrian deaths in 2013, the highest number in a decade.

Overall traffic fatalities fell last year to 248, from 293 the previous year, according to preliminary data from the city. There were 20 bicyclist fatalities in 2014, an increase from 12 deaths in 2013, and 37 motorcyclist fatalities last year, down from 42 deaths in 2013. Motor vehicle fatalities remained the same, with 59 deaths in each year.

The decline in pedestrians' deaths comes as the city continues to put in place Mayor Bill de Blasio's Vision Zero plan, a set of proposals intended to eliminate traffic deaths. Modeled after a Swedish approach that treats all road deaths and serious injuries as inherently preventable, the plan has an ambitious goal of eliminating traffic deaths by 2024. The city lowered its default speed limit to 25 miles per hour, from 30 m.p.h., and increased enforcement of speeding laws, among other initiatives.

“There is no question we are moving this city in the right direction, thanks to stepped up enforcement by the N.Y.P.D., strong traffic safety measures by the Department of Transportation, new laws passed by our legislators and the work of New Yorkers fighting for change,” the mayor said in a statement this week.

The new speed limit for most city streets went into effect in November. It was the first lowering of the general speed limit since 1964 and required state legislation because of a mandate that local limits could not dip under 30 m.p.h.

The City Council has passed a dozen bills on traffic safety, including one called Cooper's Law, which was named for a 9-year-old boy who was fatally struck by a taxi on the Upper West Side in January. The bill allows the city to suspend and revoke the license of a taxi driver or livery driver who kills or maims a pedestrian who has the right of way.

In addition, the police have strengthened enforcement against dangerous driving, increasing summonses for speeding by 42 percent and for failure to yield to pedestrians by 126 percent, city officials said. More than 117,000 drivers were given summonses for speeding last year, compared with about 82,000 in 2013.

New York in 2014 also had lower numbers in nearly every major category of crime, including murder, according to Police Department statistics.

Paul Steely White, executive director of Transportation Alternatives, an advocacy group for pedestrians and cyclists, called the year's traffic fatalities a “historic reduction.”

“Even though we still have way too much preventable carnage on our streets, it's very encouraging that we can move the needle,” Mr. White said. “The mayor has made this a top priority, and I think that's the No. 1 factor in what has led to this accomplishment.”

Mr. de Blasio has often spoken about Vision Zero in public and has frequently met with the families of victims of fatal crashes, raising the visibility of the issue, Mr. White said.

The city's transportation commissioner, Polly Trottenberg, said the campaign faced more challenges.

“In 2015, we will continue to work with our Vision Zero partners and local communities to make their neighborhoods safer and save more lives,” Ms. Trottenberg said in a statement, “because our work is far from complete.”

A version of this article appears in print on January 2, 2015, on page A14 of the New York edition with the headline: City's Pedestrian Fatalities Lowest on Record in 2014.

© 2015 The New York Times Company