

## **Oversight: Preventing Traffic Fatalities: Examining the Vision Zero Working Group's Report.**

### **The Committee on Transportation & the Committee on Public Safety**

**February 24, 2014**

Thank you for listening to those New Yorkers most needing improvements in pedestrian safety, older people! For us, this is often an issue of life, death and survival. I'm Adele Bender, representing Gray Panthers. I am 83 years old.

Living on the Queens Boulevard corridor, the Boulevard of Death, I and so many others confront danger daily. I'm scared to cross.

As Gray Panthers, we know that we must pay attention to the health and safety of all New Yorkers, particularly us with mobility limitations. Even prior to this Mayoral initiative and horrifying epidemic of pedestrian deaths, Gray Panthers in New York City began a pedestrian safety education campaign for seniors. Although we may not be as speedy as we used to be, but we sure know that we need to speak out on this issue. We want a democratic, safe, and dynamic city for all residents regardless of age or socio-economic level.

Streets safe for pedestrians of all ages and abilities is just plain fundamental. For decades along Queens Boulevard, senior citizens take the brunt of poorly designed streets. For us, it's a dance with death just to cross the street. Personally, I've known many seniors that have suffered falls due to traffic issues. And, I don't want this to continue. Even extending the amount of time for traffic lights along Queens Boulevard can improve pedestrian safety for seniors. Just so you know, after injuries from falling, traffic is the top cause of injury and death for seniors in New York City.

Let's make this simple. **Gray Panthers supports Vision Zero.**

Vision Zero must include: increased enforcement of speeding coupled with effective plans to redesign our streets, especially for us – the seniors in every neighborhood.

Obviously, redesign costs money. We want each one of you to fight for the funding needed. We expect our City Council members, the NYPD, and the DOT to represent older New Yorkers. Our streets need change now. As Council Members, just talk to your older constituents. They will tell you what it's like to fear death from walking around. They are understandably terrified

of crossing a speedway like Atlantic Avenue or Queens Boulevard. And, when crossing with children; even obeying all traffic rules, the danger is even worse.

This daily turmoil is **preventable**. Fight in Albany for a speed limit of 20 mph - a standard that make our streets more livable. Push for expanded speed enforcement cameras, so that our roads are less like speedways and more like the healthy connectors of communities.

Gray Panthers envisions an equitable, vibrant city for people of all ages. How can we express our love and participate with our families, friends and connections if we can't get safely across the street? We deserve a network of streets that delivers us safely to our intended destinations and provides support along the way. We, Gray Panthers are older and younger New Yorkers together. We've seen the past and we see the possibility for a better, safer New York. Through Vision Zero, now is the time to take action. Let us cross our streets in peace and safety for all. **NO INJURIES OR DEATHS FOR ANY NEW YORKER – OLD, YOUNG, MIDDLE AGED.** It's needless. New York can do better.

Thank you.