

Legislation Text

File #: 141049, **Version:** 0

Authorizing the Joint Committees on Streets and Services and Public Safety to hold hearings on strategies and methods to reduce speeding, such as traffic calming, to make City streets, especially those in neighborhoods, safer for drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists, and investigating how all traffic injuries and fatalities can be significantly reduced leading to the eventual goal of zero deaths, also known as a “Vision Zero” policy.

WHEREAS, Data from the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation over a five year period from 2008-2012, found that in Philadelphia there were 8,690 car crashes involving 9,051 pedestrians. These crashes caused 376 major injuries and 158 deaths; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia Police Commissioner Charles Ramsey in April 2014, described the issue of excessive speeding on Philadelphia’s streets an unacceptable culture which “Must change if we are going to save lives and reduce accidents . . . Current traffic enforcement tactics alone simply cannot bring that change”; and

WHEREAS, In 2012, this City Council enacted Bill No. 120532 which established a “Complete Streets Policy” in Chapter 11-900 of the Philadelphia Code. That policy requires that the safety and convenience of all users of our streets, whether they are pedestrians, bicyclists, public transit riders or drivers, be accommodated. The policy also prioritizes the safety of children, the elderly and persons with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, In 2008, the Philadelphia Streets Department embarked on an innovative effort to calm speeding by installing “virtual speed bumps,” which are flat pieces of plastic burned into the street, with the configuration of the colored lines conveying the illusion that the driver is about to cross the real thing. These virtual speed bumps, about one-quarter the cost of actual speed bumps, were added to 130 locations in residential neighborhoods where speeding had been a problem; and

WHEREAS, A Vision Zero approach to reduce traffic deaths has been adopted in two cities so far-New York City and San Francisco-and involves a wide variety of methodologies including but not limited to: narrower travel lanes to reduce car speeds, pinched intersections, raised crosswalks, more separated bike infrastructure, lower speed limits and automated speed enforcement, as well as speed bumps, realizing that specific locations will warrant different strategies to assure traffic safety; and

WHEREAS, It is in both the financial and human interests of the City of Philadelphia to aggressively explore all methods to assure traffic safety, as crashes involving pedestrians, bicyclists and drivers cost the city about \$1 billion per year-each road fatality averaging out to \$6.35 million, and each major injury about \$1.39 million, when costs associated with hospital bills, funerals and damaged vehicles are taken into account; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That it hereby authorizes the Joint Committees on Streets and Services and Public Safety to hold hearings on strategies and methods to reduce speeding, such as traffic calming, to make city streets, especially those in neighborhoods, safer for drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists, and investigating how all traffic injuries and fatalities can be significantly reduced leading to the eventual goal of zero deaths, also known as a “Vision Zero” policy.

