

StreetWise

STORIES AND ADVICE FOR OLDER NEW YORKERS FROM THE **NYC DOT** // 2018



Vision Zero Streets Reimagined

Older adults from Queens
Community House / Rego Park
Senior Center



QUEENS BLVD
Center for Life
Page 4

GRANDPARENTS DAYS
Crossing in Safety
Page 6

4TH AVE STROLL
A New Path
Page 10



Dear Older New Yorkers,

Welcome to the 2018 edition of *Streetwise*. We are proud to say that New York City saw the fewest traffic fatalities on record last year, driven by a 32 percent drop in pedestrian fatalities.

In January, Mayor Bill de Blasio announced

that 2017 marked the fourth consecutive year of declining traffic deaths under Vision Zero, our ambitious plan to reduce traffic deaths. Since 2013, fatalities have dropped 27 percent, strongly countering trends nationally, where fatalities have increased. Here in New York, pedestrian deaths have plummeted by nearly half—45 percent, and are now at the lowest levels since recordkeeping began in 1910.

As part of Vision Zero, New York City committed to strategies to protect pedestrians, the most vulnerable street users. For example, in 2017, DOT continued to partner with the NYPD and the Taxi and Limousine Commission on a second annual “Dusk and Darkness” enforcement and education campaign during the fall and winter evening hours that were most dangerous to pedestrians. Dusk and Darkness has helped change behaviors, and we have seen dramatic pedestrian fatality declines since the program began.

We have been busy doing other Vision Zero work, some of which you may have noticed in your own neighborhood. After years of bringing countdown clocks to thousands of pedestrian crosswalks around New York City, DOT has expanded our use

of so-called Leading Pedestrian Intervals (LPIs), which help pedestrians to get a “head start” in crosswalks—turning the “walking man” green before the motorists get a green light. LPIs have been very effective at protecting pedestrians, especially older adults and people who walk slower, from turning vehicles. With over 800 intersections now getting LPIs every year, older adults have more time at the start of a signal and the knowledge of exactly when time will run out—a combination that allows pedestrians to make informed and safe decisions when crossing the street.

More than 350 safety engineering projects have been completed since the start of Vision Zero, with more than 250 at Priority Locations. We have made streets like the Grand Concourse in the Bronx and Queens Boulevard a priority. Both streets once had terrible reputations for safety—Queens Boulevard was once known as the “Boulevard of Death”—but the great news is that neither street has seen a pedestrian or a cyclist fatality in more than three years.

I especially love the success story of Queens Boulevard, which New York City will convert in the years ahead into a new and welcoming linear park. With transformed streets like this one, it is no coincidence that Queens led all boroughs with record fatality declines in 2017.

Please enjoy the articles from this issue of *Streetwise*. And please get outside and safely enjoy our great city in 2018!

Sincerely,

Polly Trottenberg, Commissioner
New York City Department of Transportation



Signs, Vision Zero’s new public awareness campaign, acknowledges the complexities of driving in a busy urban environment, while recognizing that simple behaviors can ultimately save lives.

“Driving a car in NYC is not easy. **But saving a life is.** Because when you choose to drive slower and turn slower, you can actually save a life.”



Slow down.
VISION ZERO

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Queens Boulevard: from The Boulevard of Death to a center for life! ↩



Vision Zero, the campaign to end traffic deaths in New York City, is now in its fourth year and is changing minds and saving lives. Since its inception in 2014, traffic deaths citywide have fallen dramatically with 2017 seeing the fewest number of fatalities in the city's history. Queens Boulevard is symbolic of these changes.



Fewer than 100 years ago, Queens Boulevard was a modest country road. By the early 1940's it had been transformed to a high speed freeway, and for pedestrians became treacherous. By the turn of the 21st century, an average of 10 people per year lost their life, and the moniker "The Boulevard of Death" was born, prompting a number of engineering fixes, like red light and speed cameras, fewer travel lanes to slow down traffic, additional crosswalks, re-timed walk signals, and pedestrian islands to shorten crossing distances.

These measures helped, but the enactment of Vision Zero enabled Queens Boulevard to turn a corner. The speed limit was reduced to 25 miles per hour, car lanes were re-engineered and bike lanes, as well as crosswalks and protected medians were installed. More cameras were added. In 2019, the city will install tree-lined medians, benches and bike and walking paths to transform Queens Boulevard into a people friendly destination.

Since the debut of Vision Zero there has not been a single pedestrian death on Queens Boulevard. We now know that Vision Zero works, but there are still many roadways that need calming. **Making the changes that have transformed the Boulevard of death into a center for life must be the rule and not the exception.**



GRANDPARENTS SAFETY DAYS



Every spring, NYCDOT and Safe Kids NYC co-host safety education events in senior centers and hospitals citywide to prepare older New Yorkers for the busy outdoor activity season ahead. This year, events are scheduled from April 2nd through April 6th, when schools are out, and grandparents and their grandchildren are too!

Acknowledging that older adults are more active than ever, Grandparents Safety Days (GSD) provide seniors with information about and access to representatives of city agencies, including DOT, NYPD, FDNY, DFTA, and DOHMH, hospitals and other community organizations. These organizations send speakers, provide activities, distribute timely information, and donate safety-related giveaways at each of the GSD event sites.

Grandparents Safety Days acknowledge too the many grandparents who significantly help raise their grandchildren, providing them with resources and educational activities that support the safe and healthy growth and development of their grandchildren.

It is our hope and the goal of Grandparents Safety Days that older New Yorkers remain vital and active in their

communities, involved at every level of city life, and stay safe inside their homes, around their communities, and on New York's busy avenues and streets.

Grandparents, we encourage you to attend a DOT Grandparents Safety Day event in your community, and help spread safety information to the next generation. To learn more about this year's GSD events, please contact your local senior center or DOT for details.



GRANDPARENT TO → GRANDPARENT

Sharing today, shaping tomorrow

Mr. Lin is among the many remarkable grandparents living in NYC. An active, engaged, soon-to-be octogenarian, he lives in Forest Hills, Queens, having emigrated from Taiwan more than twenty years ago.

Like many older New Yorkers, Mr. Lin loves the city, for many purposes, including commuting several times a week from Queens to Lower Manhattan to volunteer as a Foster Grandparent* in a daycare center. "Working with children is the happiest part of my day. When they are happy, I am happy," he explains

Mr. Lin's commute from Forest Hills to Manhattan requires him to navigate some of New York City's busiest intersections, where inbound traffic from the Manhattan Bridge pours onto Canal Street, and drivers often end up blocking crosswalks and running red



Mr. Lin

lights as they inch their way forward, tailgating the vehicle in front of them.

How do grandparents, parents and their children negotiate so much traffic? Fortunately, we have experienced and wise New Yorkers like Mr. Lin to lend us their solid advice. Take a minute to read through his five safety tips on the opposite page, and then put them into practice to become a truly "Streetwise" pedestrian.

*The NYC Foster Grandparents Program is a federally funded senior volunteer program sponsored by the **NYC Department For The Aging**. Offered at 100 sites, older New Yorkers 55 and up work with children with special and/or exceptional needs, several days a week.

MR. LIN'S FIVE SAFETY TIPS



1

Make sure you can be seen.

Asegúrese de que lo vean.

確保引起司機的注意。

Drivers are not always paying attention or watching for pedestrians crossing the street. You are harder to see at night or when it is raining.



2

Pay attention.

Preste atención.

過馬路請注意。

Streets are safer when we're all alert, especially at busy intersections. Drivers can be distracted by their phones and drive without regard.



3

Look before crossing.

Mire antes de cruzar.

過馬路前停下觀察。

Most crashes happen at intersections. Be aware of turning vehicles. Drivers might not pause for you before turning.



4

Use the signal.

Utilice el semáforo.

善用燈號。

Making sure you have enough time to cross is a smart idea. Remember, drivers may be aggressive and run the light.



5

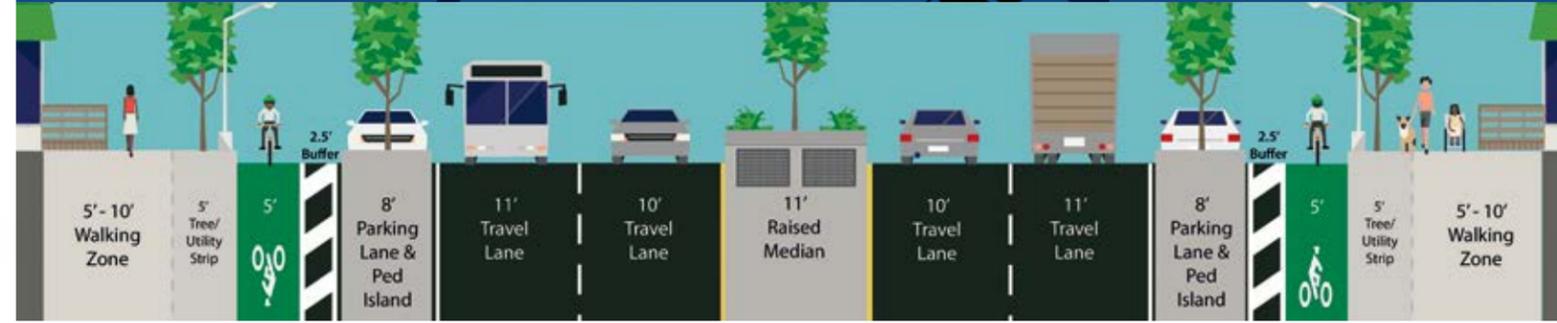
Avoid crossing midblock.

Evite cruzar a media cuadra.

避免穿越中間嵌段。

Many traffic fatalities in NYC involve speeding. Speeding cars may not be able to stop quickly, making mid-block crossing too risky.

A STROLL DOWN FOURTH AVENUE



Fourth Avenue Brooklyn Redesign



Barclay Center and Williamsburgh Savings Bank Tower skyline

Ninth Street Espresso and Threes Brewing

Washington Park

Washington Park on Fourth Avenue between Third and Fifth Streets

Green-Wood Cemetery entrance

Green-Wood Cemetery

Fourth Avenue from Downtown Brooklyn to Bay Ridge is a surprisingly fun place to walk because of its hidden treasures. In 2012, the NYC DOT made significant safety improvements, reducing travel to two lanes and widening pedestrian space. The results have been a safer, more walkable Fourth Avenue.

You can begin your walk on the corner of Atlantic and Fourth Avenue. There you will see the Williamsburgh Savings Bank Tower (known as Brooklyn's Wristwatch due to the giant clock seen on the skyscraper's upper echelons) and a distant view of the Barclays Center.

Some of the greatest adventures begin with coffee, and there is no lack thereof in New York. A highly recommended place to start is **Ninth Street Espresso**, which is not on Ninth Street but at **333 Douglass Street**, right off Fourth Avenue. It is in Gowanus, a neighborhood with an expansive commercial/indus-

trial zone where a number of novelty fitness businesses have found a home, including the Brooklyn Fencing Center, Brooklyn Boulders, a rock climbing gym, and even Homage Skateboard Academy, all in the same two-block radius.

Now head south to **Washington Park, on Fourth Avenue between Third and Fifth Streets**. There you will find something for all types of divergent interests. Have a grandkid? Take them to the JJ Byrne Playground! Are you a history buff with a particular interest in Brooklyn's colonial past? Check out the Old

Stone House, built in 1699 by a Dutch farmer and occupied by the British General Cornwallis during the American Revolution.

Heading further south on Fourth, you probably won't help but notice the juxtaposition of new glass condos and charming pre-war, low-rise, brick tenement buildings—and the diverse selection of restaurants. If you want something that will stick to your ribs, don't stop until you get to **Pauline and Sharon's Burger Shack at 597A Fourth Avenue**, at 17th Street in South Slope. It had long been known for its fresh, homemade pizza but in the fall of 2017, it reopened as a cheeseburger joint. The chef uses beef supplied by the renowned Pat LaFrieda, so their cheeseburgers are bound to be as good as their pizza!

You can walk off your meal at the **Green-Wood Cemetery**. The main entrance to the

cemetery is off **Fifth Avenue and 25th Street**, but a newer, smaller strip of the cemetery extends to Fourth Avenue, and ends at 36th Street. Created in 1838, the 478-acre cemetery is a National History Landmark and also an arboretum with centuries-old trees. Seek a hilltop, sit under a tree, and gaze at the views of lower Manhattan. As with the rest of the city, you will be surrounded by people, but most of the folks at the cemetery have been quiet for centuries and won't bother you.

Next time you visit, bring your bike. Fourth Avenue will go through a transformation over the next few years and become a virtual bike highway connecting the many neighborhoods along Fourth Avenue. The 4.5 mile project will be protected by parked cars, and all four corners of most intersections will feature planted corner pedestrian islands.

See you there!

HELPFUL RESOURCES

Do you need information about city services or have problems or complaints to report? Check the list below for programs and resources for older adults. Call 311, go to 311 Online (www.nyc.gov/apps/311) or go to specific agency websites for further information.

- **Access-a-Ride**
877.337.2017 or 718.393.4999
- **Access NYC**
www.nyc.gov/accessnyc
Use ACCESS NYC to identify City, State and Federal benefit programs that can help NYC residents and their families.
- **Centers for Disease Control**
www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/physical
Find information and suggestions on health and physical activity.
- **Council for Senior Centers and Services of NYC**
www.cscs-ny.org
Learn more about how older New Yorkers can receive quality services and programming through advocacy, training and the exchange of ideas.
- **Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA)**
<http://www.mta.info>
Dial 511 for travel information on the MTA's subways, buses, railroads, or bridges and tunnels
- **NYC Department for the Aging**
www.nyc.gov/aging
Get information on issues that affect NYC seniors: transportation programs, senior center information, health care, etc.
- **NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene**
www.nyc.gov/health
Get information and services for older adults including free and low-cost medical care, falls prevention, medicine safety, poison prevention, and health screenings.
- **NYC Poison Control Center**
www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/health/health-topics/poison-control.page
Call 1.800.222.1222 or 212.764.7667
24 hours a day/7 days a week for help with questions about medicine safety or potential poison exposures Translation services are provided.
- **NYC Department of Transportation**
www.nyc.gov/dot
Find traffic information or report a traffic problem, such as a broken signal, missing sign or pothole.

MEDICINE SAFETY

According to the American Association of Poison Control Centers adults over age 60 were involved in approximately 8% of calls to poison control centers nationally (2016). In addition, more than 76% of older adults take two or more prescription drugs and 37% take five or more monthly (CDC).

Read medicine labels and follow directions.

If you have questions, ask your doctor, pharmacist or the New York City Poison Control Center 1.800.222.1222.

Keep a list.

Include prescription and nonprescription medicines—vitamins, herbals and dietary supplements. Review the list with your doctor, nurse or pharmacist regularly.

Mind your medicine.

Create a system to remember what medicines you need to take. Use a pillbox, log, calendar, etc. Turn on lights and wear your glasses when taking medicines.

Store and dispose of medicine safely.

Keep all medicines out of reach of children. Check with the NYC PCC to find out the safest way to dispose of expired and unwanted medicines.

Post the NYC PCC phone number near your telephones and save it in your cell phone.

Call with any questions about your medicines. Free multi-language medicine safety fact sheets, medicine list card, telephone stickers and magnets are also available in many languages from the NYC PCC. Workshops are available in English, Spanish and Mandarin/Cantonese.



CALL

1.800.222.1222

212-POISONS (764.7667)

What is the Poison Control Center?

The New York City Poison Control Center (NYC PCC) is a telephone hotline available **24 hours a day, 7 days a week**. Registered pharmacists and nurses certified in poison information provide advice and information about medicine safety and potential poisons inside and outside the home. All calls are free and confidential. Translation services are provided in **150 languages**.

NYC PCC poison specialists can answer questions about your medicines, including:

- Dosing
- Missing a dose
- Taking more than the recommended amount
- Side effects
- Possible drug interactions with prescription and nonprescription medicines