

# creating safer streets starting where youth walk and bike



with the goal of building safer, healthier communities for everyone



**TODAY**, cities of all sizes are committing to eliminating traffic fatalities and serious injuries, often as part of Vision Zero initiatives. A growing number are focusing on improving safety for youth. Children and youth need and deserve special protection and starting with youth can be the spark that builds community support for a broader Vision Zero program. By shining a bright light on protecting children we can change the culture of road safety and create the buy-in needed to reach the goal of zero deaths.

The Vision Zero for Youth approach uses Safe Routes to School as a jumping-off point to apply Vision Zero principles to places where children and youth need it. Equity and consideration for traditionally disinvested communities are parts of each of the key components of Vision Zero for Youth:

- **INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS** to calm traffic, improve crosswalks and provide safe spaces for all users.
- **POLICIES AND PROGRAMS** focused on slowing vehicle travel speeds. Areas around schools are spaces to begin conversations about managing traffic speeds.
- **PARTNERSHIPS** with school districts, other city departments, local organizations, community members, elected officials and advocates.
- Use of crash **DATA** to identify problems, assess risk factors and apply solutions on a systemwide level.
- **ENGAGEMENT** of the community around a culture of road safety, with an emphasis on youth empowerment.

The Vision Zero for Youth Leadership award recognizes cities and communities that are leading the way. Los Angeles with the LA Unified School District and New York City with its Vision Zero Task Force are the first award winners and their stories highlight what Vision Zero for Youth is all about.

Kids shouldn't have to memorize which side of the intersection is best to cross... and they are not always going home – they are going to the library; they're going to the park – kids are everywhere. Let's just make all the places as safe as possible, not give them a map.

**WILL SHERMAN**

NYC DOT DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF SCHOOL SAFETY

Read the full case study at [visionzeroformyouth.org/ny](https://www.visionzeroformyouth.org/ny)



# new york

New York City takes a bold approach to making travel safer for kids and all its residents by rethinking the idea of the 'school zone' and working to make every route a safe route. The focus on youth opens opportunities to apply innovative solutions to complex road safety issues. Results show these efforts save lives and reduce injuries.

## SAFER ROAD DESIGNS NEAR SCHOOLS

The Oceania Street redesign (shown on cover) is an example of the array of safety improvements New York City Department of Transportation (NYC DOT) uses, including two-way protected bike lanes that offer cyclists a much safer space and reduces lane width, thereby slowing traffic; leading pedestrian intervals that allow pedestrians to get a head start crossing a street before traffic proceeds; removal of parking spaces to increase visibility and give more space for active travel; and both slow zones and stop-controlled high visibility crosswalks that help prioritize walking and biking in the transportation system.

## CRASHES DECLINED BY 32% IN THE FIRST YEAR.

## SAFER SPEEDS

Automated enforcement is effective at reducing speeds along a corridor. In 2014, NYC DOT installed speed safety cameras in 140 designated school zones. In 2019, NYC was able to expand the program beyond the traditional school zones and student travel time periods.

## IN THE FIRST TWO YEARS (2014-2016):

- **8%** reduction in **OVERALL CRASHES**
- **15% INJURY REDUCTION** in locations with cameras
- **23%** injury reduction for **PEDESTRIANS**
- Only **19%** of those who received a speed camera violation received a **SECOND VIOLATION**.

## BEYOND THE TRANSPORTATION SECTOR

The Vision Zero Task Force is an interagency collaboration with the goal to support and grow Vision Zero. NYC agencies include City Hall, the Police Department, DOT, Taxi and Limousine Commission, Department of Citywide Administrative Services, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Department of Education, Metropolitan Transportation Authority and the District Attorney's offices.

## ENGAGING THE CITY'S YOUTH

The city connects with students on envisioning a safer street environment and empowers them to participate in civic processes to request changes. Kids observe and perform a basic assessment around drop off and pick up, looking at matters like speed, failure to yield and pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure.

“By focusing on their own safety, we can teach them that they can ask for safer streets.”

**KIM WILEY-SCHWARTZ**  
NYC DOT ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER

## ADVOCATES DEMANDING SAFETY

Transportation Alternatives and Families for Safe Streets are integral to the success of Vision Zero and the youth focus, as a powerful partner who works outside of the city organization. Advocates supported the NYC DOT by lobbying for a citywide reduction in the speed limit to 25 mph.



Read the full case study at [visionzeroforyouth.org/la](https://visionzeroforyouth.org/la)

# Los Angeles

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) is a core part of Vision Zero in Los Angeles. The partnership between the city and school district, the data-driven approach, the focus on traffic calming and the culture of safety it works to cultivate, show how children's safety can be a leading priority within Vision Zero.

## TRUE PARTNERSHIP WITH SCHOOLS

The L.A. Department of Transportation (LADOT) partnered with the L.A. Unified School District to place a robust, safety-focused, district-wide SRTS program into the heart of Vision Zero. The school district unanimously passed a resolution in support of SRTS, Vision Zero, and Walk to School Day.

“The messaging of Safe Routes to School is something people can understand; the public, elected officials and others who work to get street improvements in place. It resonates more when you humanize the issue.”

**MARGOT OCAÑAS**  
LADOT SRTS PROGRAM COORDINATOR

## DATA DRIVEN APPROACH: HIGH INJURY NETWORK

Data collected through the SRTS program was paired with Vision Zero LA's High Injury Network to prioritize safety improvements near schools. The early work of Safe Routes to School helped to create an environment ready to accept and move with a data-based approach.

## TRAFFIC CALMING AROUND SCHOOLS: SCHOOL SLOW ZONES

The SRTS program, through its partnership with the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) and Los Angeles School Police (LASP), focused enforcement in places where child pedestrians have been hit near schools and lowered speed limits to 15 mph near 11 schools.

## CULTURE OF SAFETY

Safe Routes to School and Vision Zero LA create a climate in city government where safety is a primary focus and provide a way to engage youth and families around the culture of road safety.

“SRTS gave us a framework to talk about street safety in a more holistic way,” shifting the conversation from not just spot street improvements but network improvements.”

**VALERIE WATSON**  
LADOT SUPERVISING TRANSPORTATION PLANNER

**VISION ZERO FOR YOUTH** is an initiative of the National Center for Safe Routes to School supported by the Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center, FIA Foundation and UNC Highway Safety Research Center.