

OFFERED BY COUNCILORS ED FLYNN, JOHN FITZGERALD, HENRY SANTANA, MEJIA, MURPHY, WEBER, WORRELL AND LOUIJEUNE



CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

ORDER FOR A HEARING TO DISCUSS PEDESTRIAN SAFETY, TRAFFIC-CALMING, AND EXPANDING THE SAFETY SURGE PROGRAM IN THE CITY OF BOSTON

WHEREAS: Pedestrian safety is a critical component of public safety and overall quality of life for our residents, and the City of Boston is committed to pedestrian safety as part of Vision Zero - the goal of having zero serious and fatal traffic crashes; *and*

WHEREAS: The city lowered its default speed limit on neighborhood streets from 30 mph to 25 mph in 2017, with calls from City Councilors to lower it further to 20 mph. The City Council has also held multiple hearings for several years on pedestrian safety, concurrent pedestrian phasing traffic signals, and advocacy on using federal infrastructure funding to install infrastructure such as speed humps, raised crosswalks, pedestrian islands and rapid flash beacons in our neighborhoods; *and*

WHEREAS: Over the weekend, a SUV struck a pedestrian on Dorchester Avenue at Andrew Square before crashing into a restaurant due to speeding and reckless driving. Unfortunately, the pedestrian tragically passed away from his injuries, and the driver and passenger are in critical condition; *and*

WHEREAS: Last year, a 4 year-old child was fatally struck by a truck at Sleeper Street and Congress Street in the Fort Point Neighborhood. As of October 2024 last year, there were 137 crashes and eight pedestrian fatalities in Boston; *and*

WHEREAS: These tragedies remind us of the work that must be done to realize Vision Zero in terms of the traffic-calming infrastructure improvements, slower speeds and enhanced traffic enforcement by the Boston Police Department to address pedestrian and traffic safety where congestion has gradually increased over the years; *and*

WHEREAS: In 2023, the City of Boston announced the Safety Surge program, in which they have begun to install zones of speed humps on eligible neighborhood streets, redesign intersections, and make changes to traffic signals in order to make our streets safer for our pedestrians, drivers, and cyclists; *and*

WHEREAS: The installation of speed humps is welcomed by many residents as a way to slow down cars, but currently speed humps are only being installed on smaller side streets, but not on wider and busier streets where cars are consistently speeding and serious crashes also occur with residents having to cross main streets, commercial roads, high traffic corridors, and bus routes; *and*

WHEREAS: Main streets, commercial roads, high traffic corridors, and bus routes are often dangerous for pedestrians as that is where the majority of pedestrian and vehicular traffic are located. These areas should also have traffic-calming infrastructure in place to force speeding vehicles to slow down and allow pedestrians, our seniors, persons with disabilities, and young families to cross the street more safely; *and*

WHEREAS: It is critical for the City of Boston to continue its focus on pedestrian safety and traffic calming improvements to realize Vision Zero - including whether the Safety Surge program should be updated with infrastructure to be installed on main streets, commercial roads, high traffic corridors, and bus routes to ensure road safety for all; *and*

THEREFORE BE IT ORDERED:

That the appropriate Committee of the Boston City Council holds a hearing to discuss ways to improve pedestrian safety by updating and expanding the Safety Surge program. Representatives from the Boston Transportation Department and other relevant and interested parties shall be invited to testify.

Filed in Council: January 15, 2025