

Why not accelerate and increase vision zero education?

November 10, 2015

By Corey Bearak

So much of the discussion involving New York City's Vision Zero involves enforcement and sanctions. Early in my career, I recall an elected sharing with me that legislating behavior result in changes even where enforcement follows not so much; the theory and practice involves more folks abiding by the new rules than ignoring them.

Often, the discussion on new laws involve a period of education and adjustment, often with intensive outreach and meetings of all kinds. The City certainly took that path with paid sick leave and I recall many meetings after the Affordable Care Act became law.

A commentary as the week began by NY1's Bob Hardt emphasized education. I shared it and one comment back concurred but queried why no the education effort made to address behavior. Not incorrect. All the more interesting since many tools to share with the public exist on the City's website.

But include a more focused discussion on distracted driving, talking, lighting up, chugging on that cup, messing with the radio, fumbling with directions, taking in the views, not just cell phone use. The City has plenty of means to reach out to the public and perform the education and outreach. Many useful materials permeate the vision zero site. The website suggests plans for outreach from schools to senior centers and everyone in between. However, just as many voters just toss political mail (hopefully never if designed by this commentator), the best outreach efforts often involve in-person. No, I argue not for door-to-door canvassing but yes to many meetings where citizens get the word. And from experience this means not a reliance on special meeting but reaching where folks already plan to go, including civic meetings, union halls, fraternal and other social organizations, houses of worships, school parent groups.

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