

U.S. DOT Officials, Colorado Safety Community Promote Vision Zero Effort

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Officials from the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) joined the Colorado Department of Transportation, Denver Public Works, and the Denver Police Department today to remind all Colorado road users to share the road attentively and safely.

“The best approach to safety is to work with stakeholders at the State and local levels, and in the private sector, to prevent accidents before they happen,” said U.S. Secretary of Transportation Elaine L. Chao.

Today, Acting Administrator of DOT’s National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) James Owens and DOT’s Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Acting Administrator K. Jane Williams visited Colorado to remind road users of *Denver Vision Zero*, a five-year plan that was crafted by city agencies and State and community partners. The plan calls for improved street design, safe speeds, a culture of safety, and improved data.

“Our mission is to protect Americans on our roads,” said Owens. “And our collective work is paying off. NHTSA recently released [highway crash fatality data for 2018](#), showing a 2.4% decline in overall fatalities, the second consecutive year of reduced crash fatalities.”

“U.S. Transportation Secretary Elaine L. Chao’s top priority is safety,” said Williams. “That’s one reason why the Federal Transit Administration is working to help our transit agency partners eliminate grade-crossing crashes and prevent trespassing to keep the traveling public safe. This safety partnership will raise awareness and save lives.”

According to the *Denver Vision Zero Data Dashboard*, from January 1 to October 31, 2019, there were 61 fatal crashes in the city. Bicyclists, pedestrians, and motorcyclists account for most of those deaths, at 56% of all traffic fatalities.

“We clearly have more work to do to ensure that Denver’s transportation safety needs are met,” said Owens. “I’m confident that with the help of our safety partners, we can make the Denver area one of the safest in America for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists.”

Although overall traffic related deaths were down across the nation in 2018, fatalities among pedestrians and bicyclists and other vulnerable road users increased by 3.4%. The data shows that pedestrian fatalities occurred overwhelmingly after dark (76%), when many pedestrians had some alcohol in their systems (38%), or were outside of intersections (74%). Bicyclist fatalities also often occurred after dark (50% of the time), with some alcohol in their systems (26%), or outside of intersections (60%).

To address these numbers, NHTSA is examining current and planned research related to these vulnerable road users, including recently announced plans for [upgrades to the New Car Assessment Program](#) – the [5-Star Ratings system](#) for new vehicles. As part of these NCAP upgrades, NHTSA will consider new technologies tied to the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists, among other vulnerable road users.

Meanwhile, DOT’s Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) awarded Colorado \$46.6 million over the past three years because Colorado’s annual combined pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities exceeded 15%

of the total annual crash fatalities in the state. FHWA is also working to reduce fatalities with the Bicycle and Pedestrian Program, which promotes safe, comfortable, and convenient walking and bicycling for people of all ages and abilities.

Additionally, FHWA is focused on pedestrian and bicycle transportation through funding. In 2019, States obligated over \$1 billion of Federal-Aid Highway Program funding to pedestrian and bicyclist programs and projects, policy guidance, program management, resource development, and the availability of an FHWA Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator point of contact in each of its division offices.

Federal, State, and local government transportation agency representatives attended today's press conference, including: Denver city government personnel, the Colorado Department of Public Health, Regional Transportation District representatives, Denver Regional Council of Governments, Denver Vision Zero staff, Mothers Against Drunk Driving, Bike Denver, Denver Vision Zero's grassroots local partners, and federal and State transportation safety staff.

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