

**Remarks Prepared for
David Friedman, Deputy Administrator
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
Philadelphia Pedestrian Safety Kick-off Event
Wednesday, October 15, 2014**

Thank you, Deputy Mayor Cutler, and thank you to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the City of Philadelphia for making the safety of pedestrians a top priority.

At the Department of Transportation and at NHTSA, we're committed to improving the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists because Americans are increasingly choosing walking and riding as alternatives to their daily commutes or just for fun or exercise.

But walking and biking aren't just lifestyle choices; expanded access to these options can improve the economic wellbeing of a city and its people. More plentiful and more affordable transportation options means that we're all better connected to resources and to new job opportunities.

We all have to work hard to ensure the safety of the growing number of pedestrians and bicyclists on our roads--whether it's how we drive, build roads, apply technologies, or explain and enforce the law. We all have a part to play in helping keep our neighbors safe from harm.

That's why the NHTSA and the entire Department of Transportation are working together to develop a new approach to pedestrian and bicycle safety.

At NHTSA, we call it the RITE approach, spelled R-I-T-E. Yes, I'm misspelling right. And it would be completely understandable for you to chalk that up to my poor spelling as an engineer.

But in this case, it is intentional, because RITE stands for responsibility, infrastructure, technology, and both education and enforcement.

The RITE approach emphasizes responsibility—not just as drivers, pedestrians and cyclists—but also as policymakers and transportation experts and advocates to take steps to better protect the public. We all need to work to improve safety for the growing number of pedestrians and bicyclists. That is the foundation for moving this effort forward successfully and one of the reasons I am here today, because it is clear that Philadelphia is working to embrace this responsibility.

We also place a strong emphasis on expanding Infrastructure with the safety of walkers and bikers in mind.

We know that the design of our roads and bridges, crosswalks and sidewalks can improve or undermine safety. There are proven strategies that guide us to safer designs for medians and crosswalk signals that are shown to reduce pedestrian crashes. For example, pedestrian hybrid beacons, also known as HAWKs, which include lights and signs to warn drivers of pedestrians in the crosswalk, have been shown to reduce pedestrian crashes by nearly 70 percent.

Technology can speed the development of new vehicle systems and other safety advances that will save lives and improve roadway safety for pedestrians and cyclists.

For example, NHTSA recently issued our final rule mandating improved rear visibility, basically back up cameras and video screens, in all new cars by 2018. New vehicle-to-vehicle communications technologies also have the potential to communicate with mobile devices carried by pedestrians or cyclists to warn them of a potential crash.

Education and Enforcement complete our strategy because Americans will drive, walk, and ride more safely when they understand the dangers—and when those messages are backed up by law enforcement writing tickets.

I believe Pennsylvania and the City of Philadelphia are working to embrace your own right approach.

The enforcement efforts you are kicking off today will send a clear signal to all that following the rules of the road is critical for protecting pedestrians, who are always on the losing end of a crash involving two tons of metal, glass, and plastic on the one hand, and flesh and bone on the other.

And the education efforts you began in September will ensure that your key safety messages are spread around the city and targeted at those we know are at greatest risk for being involved in crashes with pedestrians, our youngest drivers.

These are the kinds of projects that exemplify how we can put highway trust funds to work to save lives and support the more plentiful and more affordable transportation options our nation needs to safely connect all of us to our families and to opportunities for growth and success.

But there, we face a serious challenge. We desperately need a long-term surface transportation reauthorization that addresses chronic underinvestment in our nation's transportation system.

That is why President Obama offered Congress the Grow America Act, which it would not only stabilize the highway trust fund but boost its investment by more than \$22 billion each year over four years. It includes significant new resources for state infrastructure and safety programs, and it includes additional funding directed at improving the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists.

The President offered the GROW AMERICA Act in April. It's now October. Yet, we're still far away from Congressional action on the long-term reauthorization that our nation needs—the kind of long-term surface transportation bill that has led to significant progress in the past.

Since 1970, highway fatalities have declined by 36 percent, and by 22 percent in the past decade alone. We achieved these results in part because of effective highway safety laws, public education, and aggressive enforcement. A similar approach can work for pedestrian safety.

Pedestrian safety is a complex challenge, which is why we've developed a multidimensional approach to reducing fatalities and injuries. With the RITE approach, we can have safer roadways for drivers, pedestrians, and cyclists—and that will mean fewer tragedies, less sorrow, and stronger, safer communities.

So, again, I congratulate Pennsylvania and the City of Philadelphia for securing the \$525,000 in federal funding that will support its pedestrian safety initiative and for putting it to good use protecting the lives of this great city's pedestrians. I look forward to seeing the results and being able to share them with cities across the nation who need the knowledge and resources to protect their own.

Thank you.

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