



# 2018-2019 LISTENING SESSIONS REPORT

PREPARED BY





# BACKGROUND

Between September 2018 and February 2019, the Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia, AARP PA, PECO and the Vision Zero Alliance held a series of transportation-related “Listening Sessions” across two major sections of Philadelphia: Greater North Philadelphia, and Greater West Philadelphia.

The goals of those Listening Sessions was to hear directly from communities where, according to Philadelphia city data, injurious and deadly crashes are most prevalent, and work together to figure out how changes can be made to these dangerous neighborhood streets.

The Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia and AARP PA are interested in creating safer, more-liveable streets throughout Philadelphia. But we understand the limitations communities are often faced with—especially those communities outside Center City, Philadelphia—as it pertains to safety, liveability and infrastructure maintenance.

So, our organizations reached out to neighborhood organizations already working within certain neighborhoods through West Philadelphia and North Philadelphia in an attempt to set up neighborhood listening sessions and hear directly from the people of those neighborhoods about the issues that bother them and what they would like to see happen on the street. In so doing, our organizations hired Mantua Civic Association President De’Wayne Drummond, a third-generation civic leader, to facilitate and lead the discussions.

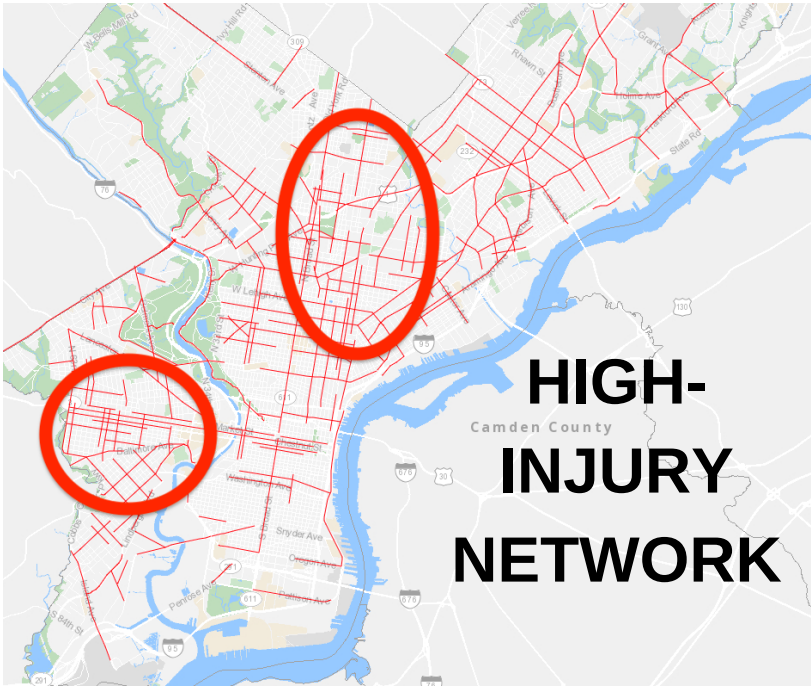
We included resource guides for attendees and provided all attendees with free passes to the Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia’s Vision Zero Conference on March 16, 2019.



# NORTH AND WEST PHILADELPHIA

In September 2017, the City of Philadelphia released its first Vision Zero report and "high injury network" maps. That map located the 12 percent of streets where 50 percent of traffic deaths and severe injuries take place. Most prominent in that map, which featured the most streets and street miles were North Philadelphia, and West Philadelphia.

Therefore, our organizations decided it was important to go into these communities and speak about traffic, transportation, and other issues. We reached out to several community organizations already doing great work through neighborhoods in these areas of the cities, told them about our goals, and co-hosted meetings along high-injury network streets.





# HOW SESSIONS WERE RUN

For each listening session, Drummond would introduce our audience to the Vision Zero issue and would present the high injury network to the audience. The audience was also shown what the high-injury streets in their own neighborhoods were, and was presented with several questions about their streets, including: are there any streets they completely avoid? What are their biggest frustrations as it pertains to other road users?

Attendees were invited to organize into small groups and discuss these questions. They then presented back to the full group with their answers; Bicycle Coalition employees took notes and collected all notes taken during the session, then used all that information to put together this report, which we hope will help city elected officials and members of the appropriate city departments better understand what communities throughout Philadelphia need to make their streets safer.

**Three meetings were held throughout West Philadelphia: At the Enterprise Center (46th and Chestnut), the Cobbs Creek Library (58th and Baltimore), and the Ralston Center (43rd and Chestnut).**

According to those neighbors who attended the West Philadelphia sessions, the worst issues facing West Philadelphia pedestrians, cyclists and drivers were potholes, sinkholes, construction without pedestrian walkways, a lack of lighting, Uber/Lyft drop-off, and overgrown shrubbery/trees.

At the Ralston Center, which focuses on quality of life in aging at home providing those 55 yrs+, there was a sense that Philadelphia's driving culture cannot change.

When asked what, if anything, can stop Philadelphia's drivers from running stop signs, inching into the crosswalk, and illegally parking, one attendee responded, "Nothing."

# WEST PHILADELPHIA



The most dangerous places/streets West Philadelphia residents avoid, according to attendees gathered at the **Ralston Center** and **Enterprise Center**:

Walnut all throughout West Philly  
Chestnut all throughout West Philly: Issues included blocked lanes/Obstructions  
57th & Chestnut  
Farragut & Locust  
47th & Locust: Dangerous intersection. School bus pickup & drop-off  
48th & Locust: Speeding / reckless drivers  
50th St: Speeding  
51st & Osage: Stop sign suggested on 51st, police aren't enforcing traffic.  
52nd between Pine & Larchwood: Northbound school zone light obscured by trees  
Spring Garden from 33rd to 38th

## **Proposed changes:**

More/better signage  
Redesign streets to make crosswalks smaller  
Easier disabled access  
Open the corners for people with disabilities  
A lot of areas need better ADA ramps  
Trolley lights / Should have lit up signs  
Speed Bumps  
Physical changes that force drivers to slow down  
Physically protected bike lanes  
Pedestrian lead time at intersections



The most dangerous issues West Philadelphia residents at the **Cobbs Creek Library** noted:

**Construction**

Felt dangerous to be a driver and cyclist  
Causing bad parking, crashes in middle of street

**Lighting**

We need neighborhood streets to be brighter. They're dim (3)  
Lighting is old - they're not given LCD lights here  
There should be better lighting around recreation centers, schools  
City needs to upgrade lighting  
Hinderance to elderly people

**Potholes**

Bikers must go over them or swerve to get around it

**Lawlessness**

Driving seems lawless - after stop light turns red, at least 1-2 cars will blow the red light

**Proposed changes:**

**Infrastructure**

Reflective stop signs  
Automated speed enforcement  
Cameras inside/outside schools so they can identify who is speeding while the kids are in school.  
Having different physical barriers would help people feel safer  
Parking protected bike lanes

**PSAs**

Lower speed limits with enforcement  
Crazy / unsafe driving  
Baltimore & 58th & Cobbs Creek - not easy for elderly to live in the city.



# NORTH PHILADELPHIA

In North Philadelphia, we hosted listening sessions alongside several community organizations. For a meeting along **North 5th Street**, we partnered with **HACE**; in **Hunting Park**, our groups partnered with **Esperanza**; and for a Listening Session along **Lehigh Avenue**, we partnered with **Asociación Puertorriqueños en Marcha** and **HACE**. These organizations invited us into their neighborhoods and helped promote the listening sessions.

## Along the Lehigh and 5th Street corridors, the Top Concerns were:

- Lack of police enforcement.
- Rolling stops
- People disregarding speed limits
- People disregarding pedestrian right-of-way signs

## Proposed changes:

- Increased enforcement rather than an increase of fines
- Cameras and intelligent camera placement (near schools would be best)
- School Zone speed cameras
- Better organized pick up/drop off at schools
- Speed bumps in more areas, specifically around schools
- Better infrastructure improvements and upkeep
- Quicker fixing Potholes / lane restriping
- Working traffic lights / Brighter lights to enable better vision at night
- Sidewalk repairs and enforcement
- Sidewalk improvements/repairs - especially mid-block, not just the corners
- Enforce cars parked on/blocking the sidewalk



# NORTH PHILADELPHIA: CONTINUED

We hosted our final North Philadelphia listening session at Esperanza in the Hunting Park section of Philadelphia.

## **In Hunting Park, the worst streets/intersections were the following:**

Kensington Ave  
Lehigh Ave  
Frankford  
American  
Germantown and Sedgley Aves  
13th Going North  
12th & Glenwood Ave  
17th & Glenwood Ave

## **Proposed changes:**

- Speed bumps / cushions
- More visible stop signs
- Raised pedestrian walking area
- Speed cushions
- Elevates pedestrian visibility
- Enforce no parking on sidewalk
- Enforce speed limit and lower it
- Stopping drivers from turning while pedestrians are crossing
- Painted / striped streets
  - o Clarified space for bikes & pedestrians
  - o Bikes in bus blind spot
  - o Wants bike space but need better design
- Bring Indego Bike Share bikes to own neighborhood; not everyone has cars





As these listening sessions were going on, the City of Philadelphia introduced its first-ever "Neighborhood Slow Zones" program and called for applications. HACE held a meeting shortly after our listening session and, according to HACE NAC program director Stasia Monteiro, residents were motivated to apply, partly based on the information that had been posed throughout the first listening session.

HACE applied for a neighborhood slow zone against dozens of other organizations and neighborhoods -- and they won one of two pilots. They will be working throughout the next year on their future slow zone in the Fairhill neighborhood of North Philadelphia.

Those neighborhood slow zones, made possible due to Automated Red Light Enforcement funds, will be completed by September 2021, according to the City of Philadelphia.

Additionally, we hope the information gathered at these Listening Sessions will give the City of Philadelphia a better understanding of how difficult it is for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists to move throughout the city safely.

The most common change residents of Cobbs Creek, University City, Walnut Hill, Fairhill, Kensington, and Hunting Park asked for was:

- **Speed cushions to slow down drivers**
- **Better speed enforcement**
- **More pedestrian infrastructure, like bump outs, stop signs, and PSAs**
- **Quicker fixes to destroyed sidewalk and street infrastructure**
- **Stricter enforcement of behavior, like double parking, parking on sidewalks**

The Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia, AARP PA, and the Vision Zero Alliance will continue working to advocate for these changes throughout Philadelphia, and engage with these communities to implement changes on the ground that make streets safe for every Philadelphia zip code.