

Talking Points for Senate Majority Policy Committee Hearing on Aggressive Driving

10am, April 7th, 2026

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Located at CCP Northeast Regional Center (12901 Townsend Rd, Phila, PA)

Good morning, I am Christopher Puchalsky, the Director of Policy and Strategic Initiatives for the City of Philadelphia's Office of Transportation and Infrastructure Systems. We appreciate the opportunity to testify before you today on the topic of aggressive driving and its impacts on Philadelphia.

Aggressive driving is defined by distinct behaviors including speeding, running red lights, and excessively changing lanes. You don't need to be a traffic safety expert to see that Philadelphia has an aggressive driving problem, but digging into the data shows a clear picture of its devastating impacts.

Half of the fatal crashes that occurred in Philadelphia over the last five years were a result of aggressive driving. This data is aligned with the experience of Philadelphia residents; in a recent survey **24%** cited speeding as their top concern, while **23%** were most concerned about drivers running red lights.

These behaviors have particularly devastating consequences for crashes involving pedestrians. In 2024, **45%** of serious injury crashes involved a car hitting a pedestrian. Speeding is the number one determining factor in the severity of injuries and likelihood of death for person that is hit.

While aggressive driving is a problem that plagues many U.S. cities, Philadelphia experiences more fatalities per capita than our peer cities. We see triple the rate of New York City, and far higher rates than Chicago and Boston. The numbers aren't just statistics. They are mothers, fathers, daughters, and sons, whose lives are either lost or permanently altered. In our Vision Zero plan we make sure to feature stories of the people who've lost their lives due to aggressive driving. I'm sure that you, like myself, have had the honor of working with families who have lost their loved ones due to traffic deaths and are doing the hard work of during grief into change.

The irresponsible behavior of aggressive driving does not happen in a vacuum. Our environment influences our behavior. Roadway design can either encourage or discourage aggressive driving.

There are a series of infrastructure-based solutions that can prevent aggressive driving, and the City has been working to implement these solutions across Philadelphia.

The Federal Highway Administration has developed the Safe System Roadway Design Hierarchy which lays out effective solutions and how these improvements should be prioritized by transportation agencies.

OTIS adheres to the FHWA guidance when designing our projects. Let me describe the Safe System Roadway Design Hierarchy using examples from the NE around Philadelphia.

The first tier asks the roadway designer to remove severe conflicts.

These safety improvements remove conflicting movements through physical separation to protect all roadway users. Removing roadway conflicts has been successful throughout the city, some examples include:

- Installing medians and pedestrian islands like the ones on North Broad Street
- Separated Bike Lanes on Market Street/JFK Boulevard and Tabor Avenue

Once we've removed severe conflicts, the second tier focuses on reducing vehicle speeds.

These safety improvements slow traffic and reduce impact forces on the human body if a crash occurs.

- This strategy has been impactful through the automated speed enforcement program on Roosevelt Blvd, which has reduced speeding on the Boulevard by **95%**, KSI crashes by **21%**, and crashes involving pedestrians by **50%**
- Additional Automated Speed Enforcement came last year to Broad Street and school zones and will come this year to Route 13 which includes portions of Frankford Ave, Levick Street and Robbins Street.
- Reducing overly wide lanes psychologically induces lower speeds such as on 15th between Vine and JFK and on 5th between Callowhill and Spring Garden

From reducing speeds, we then move down to tier 3, managing conflicts in time

These safety improvements reduce traffic collisions by separating users in time. Most of these strategies rely on traffic signals to direct traffic safely.

A great example of managing conflicts in time is the City's installation of Leading Pedestrian Intervals (LPIs) on Bustleton Ave at Philmont Street, Hendrix Street, Red Lion Road, Rhawn Street, Cottman Ave, and Tyson Ave.

An LPI gives pedestrians crossing the street a head start before vehicles are given the green light to turn, thus making the pedestrians more visible to motorists.

Finally, after all improvements in the other tiers have been implemented, Tier 4 addresses safety by increasing attentiveness and awareness

These safety improvements help drivers avoid potential crashes and reinforce that responsibility is shared among all road users.

- In the Northeast and across the City, Neighborhood Slow Zones provide increased attentiveness and awareness for drivers through gateway treatments, visible traffic calming, and speed limit setting. Slow zones have been implemented at Fairhill, Cramp, and Willard.

In addition to infrastructure improvements, the City has partnered on a series of enforcement actions with our colleagues at the Philadelphia Police Department and with PennDOT, the Philadelphia Parking Authority, and the Pennsylvania State Police.

These enforcement tactics include “traffic enforcement blitzes” carried out by local and state law enforcement. These operations primarily take place on routes in our High Injury Network; the 12% of streets that are responsible for 80% of deaths and serious injuries. This High Injury Network is a highly effective tool in targeting areas that are the most severely affected by crashes.

We appreciate the Senate Majority Policy Committee’s interest in aggressive driving and reducing the fatalities on our roadways. Mayor Parker deeply believes in intergovernmental cooperation, and we look forward to continuing to work together to address aggressive driving.

Before finishing, I’d like to thank Senators Picozzi and Argall for their support in making our community’s streets safer. Coordination with our state partners makes efforts like ours possible. Without your past leadership we would be fighting with one hand tied behind our backs. The legislation that you’ve championed has saved numerous lives here in the NE and throughout the state.

Talking points on touchier topics in Senator Picozzi's district in case he asks:

Ryan Avenue - We haven't gotten concrete curbs out there yet. Often cited as a "no one uses this" facility and is chronically parked in

- Answer - We're upgrading the protection and continuing to expand the network

Castor Avenue - Not in his district but he is opposed. "Only X people have died" talking point. It's going to ruin the business corridor, create traffic, and no one bikes

- Answer - when we did robust outreach to everyone in the community, the results were clear: Castor Avenue is unsafe and uncomfortable for everyone who uses it. The new project will make it safer to drive, walk, bike, and take transit.