AUTOMATED SAFETY ENFORCEMENT NYC

Expanding and Enhancing Camera Enforcement

Since first being granted authorization to use automated enforcement in 1988, New York City's "demonstration" programs for red light, bus lane, and school speed zone laws have been a proven success. New York City should have the ability to respond to traffic problems and safety threats, following data, experience, and best practices to deter dangerous operation, whenever and wherever it may be happening.

During the pandemic, New York City has witnessed an alarming increase in traffic injuries and fatalities, caused by factors including increased late night speeding and reckless driving behavior. It is essential that the City, working with its partners in the Legislature, receive greater flexibility to use its proven safety programs without cumbersome restrictions. In 2021:

- Thirty-one percent of all on-street traffic fatalities in NYC took place in school speed zones that had cameras, but at times when they were not legally permitted to operate: overnight and on weekends.

- Even though a single violation is a sufficient deterrent for many drivers, over 44,000 vehicles received ten or more speed camera violations—but additional violations are capped at $50 per violation, not enough to deter these drivers.

New York City was among the first major American cities to receive authorization for **red light cameras**, which it has operated since 1993. The average daily number of red light running violations issued at camera locations has declined by over 84%. And right angle collisions causing injury—the crashes that red light cameras seek to prevent—declined at camera locations by about 58%. But, while the Legislature has renewed the law multiple times since initial passage, the number of intersections protected by red light cameras has remained capped at 150 since 2009.

Speed cameras change individual driver behavior.

- In 2021, more than half of vehicles that received one violation did not receive a second.

- Since 2014, the majority of cited vehicles have only one or two violations.

Speed cameras are enormously effective.

- As of December 2020, speeding at camera locations during hours of operation had dropped by an average of 72%.

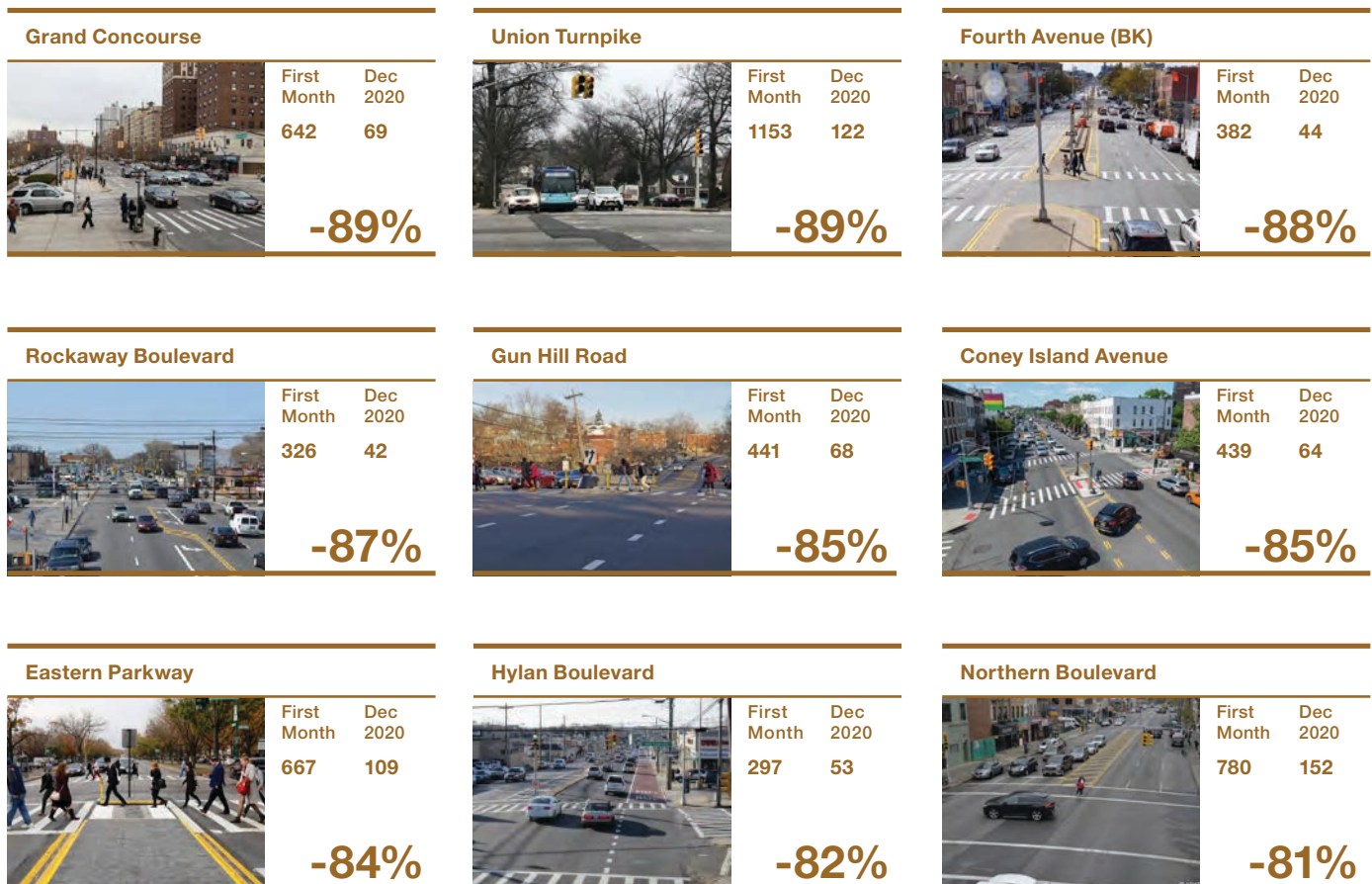- Injuries have declined 14% on school speed zone corridors with cameras.

Escalating penalties

Currently, only the bus lane enforcement program has escalating penalties for repeat offenses. Local control should give New York City the ability to impose escalating penalties for existing programs and new ones, and the flexibility to adjust the amounts to make sure they are effective in addressing severe recidivism. The goal is for the penalty to achieve behavior change. In all cases the initial penalty should remain at no more than $50—an amount that is effective at changing most drivers' behavior.

Equity and Automated Speed Enforcement in NYC

- Automated enforcement is more efficient and impartial than in-person enforcement and reduces interaction with law enforcement. With a $50 fine and no points on a license, DOT's automated enforcement programs have much lower penalties than tickets issued by NYPD.

- Most violators are not residents of the neighborhoods where the cameras are located. A DOT analysis found 66% of speeders lived more than three miles away from the camera that caught them. And over 40% of speed camera violators have vehicles registered outside the City of New York.

- DOT places cameras based on speeding and serious crash data, and does not take requests for locations or remove cameras based on complaints. There is no significant correlation between income or race and DOT's placement of speed cameras

- DOT's aim is to have the number of camera violations decrease over time—both as people learn the consequences of speeding and also as we continue to redesign streets. Safety is our number one priority—not raising revenue. DOT does not have revenue sharing agreements with our contractors. This means that our vendors have no monetary incentive to issue more violations.

- NYC has spent $1.7 billion in capital and expense funds to further Vision Zero from FY14-21—three times more than the speed camera program brought in during that time—and budgeted nearly $3 billion in FY22-26. Vision Zero spending is allocated to the areas that need it most based on safety data—with an explicit focus on equity going forward.

Decline in Average Daily Speeding Violations in Camera-Enforced School Speed Zones Along Key Corridors

Grand Concourse

First Month	Dec 2020
642	69

-89%

Union Turnpike

First Month	Dec 2020
1153	122

-89%

Fourth Avenue (BK)

First Month	Dec 2020
382	44

-88%

Rockaway Boulevard

First Month	Dec 2020
326	42

-87%

Gun Hill Road

First Month	Dec 2020
441	68

-85%

Coney Island Avenue

First Month	Dec 2020
439	64

-85%

Eastern Parkway

First Month	Dec 2020
667	109

-84%

Hylan Boulevard

First Month	Dec 2020
297	53

-82%

Northern Boulevard

First Month	Dec 2020
780	152

-81%

Source: New York City Department of Transportation

Speed cameras can prevent overnight and weekend speeding in NYC

Ratio of speed camera trigger events to total traffic volumes, all locations, June 2021
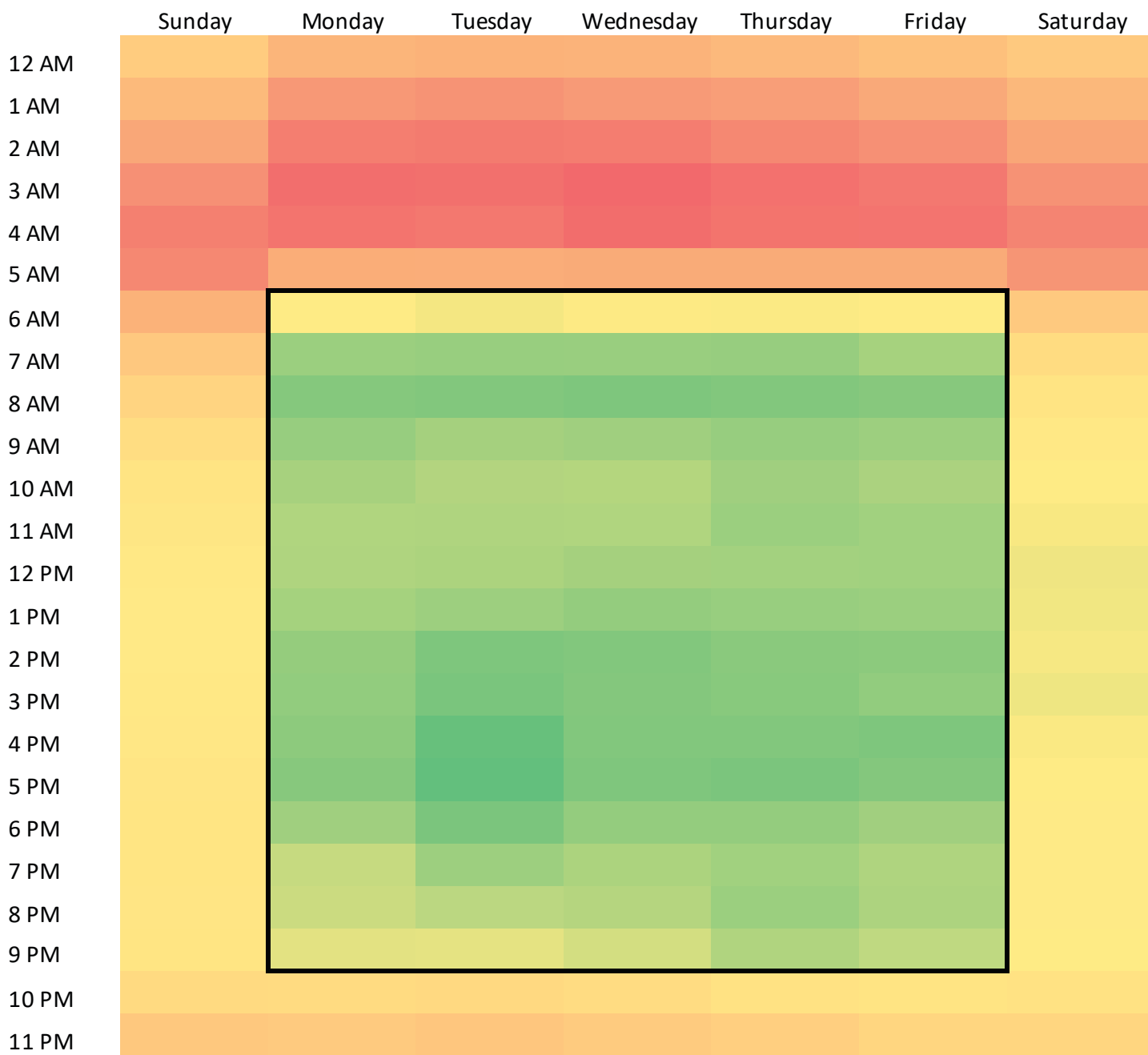
Darkest red (Wednesday 3 AM) is 6.97%

Darkest green (Tuesday 5 PM) is 0.70%

Percentage of vehicles triggering a speed camera (not necessarily the final number determined to be speeding) Black outline indicates hours of operation permitted by State law.