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E-Bike Crash That Killed Queens Woman Sparks Calls To Add More Safety Measures To Protect Pedestrians On NYC Streets

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NEW YORK (CBSNewYork) – The life of a beloved Queens real estate broker was cut short after she was struck by an e-bike while walking to get dinner.

The motorized bikes are now part of the city's rapidly changing streetscape, and, as CBS2's Lisa Rozner reported Tuesday, citywide there has been a spike in pedestrian traffic fatalities.

There was a helmet and an e-bike on its side in the pouring rain at the corner of 21st Avenue and 31st Street in Astoria on Friday.

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Police say just after 8:30 p.m., the 26-year-old e-bike deliveryman was traveling east on 21st Avenue when he struck 54-year-old Kelly Killian, who was trying to cross in the crosswalk.

Her brother said she was picking up dinner with a friend.

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She started her own brokerage and sold homes for R New York.

"She's happy and talkative and fun and when she would come into the office it wouldn't even be a two- or three-minute conversation. It would be an hour conversation," the real estate company's Hillary Barr said. "She added light to a room."

It's not clear who had the right of way. Police said the delivery driver stayed at the scene and has not been charged.

Police sources said drugs or alcohol were not a factor.

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Killian is the second pedestrian to die from an e-bike accident since November, when New York City legalized e-bikes. However, citywide, pedestrian traffic fatalities have more than doubled this year. In all, 27 died from January to May of 2020, compared to 56 so far this year.

"I think it's a conflict of the city coming back to life, people not using mass transit and bringing their cars into Manhattan. Not being comfortable driving in Manhattan because that a real issue, you know, with bike lanes and lots of pedestrians and cyclists," personal injury attorney Daniel Flanzig said.



Since the start of the pandemic, the city has installed nearly 80 miles of new or upgraded bike lanes, not to mention outdoor dining structures.

On Tuesday morning, Families for Safe Streets called on state lawmakers to pass the Crash Victim Rights and Safety Act, which includes lowering speed limits, and installing more speed cameras.

"A thousand New Yorkers are killed every year in traffic crashes. These are completely preventable deaths that we have the power to stop," state Sen. Andrew Gounardes said.

"Pass a law that will give all the power to New York City to regulate anything on transportation," New York City Transportation Committee Chair Ydanis Rodriguez said.

In Kelly Killian's case, the family does not blame the cyclist and believes it was an accident.

"I'm sure that guy who hit her feels awful, and has to live with it, so that's pretty tough. So, it's bad for everybody, really," Chris Killian said.

NYPD stats show the majority of the pedestrian fatalities this year -- around 50 -- have been related to car accidents.

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