

New York City Bicycle Coalition

Bikes Now
Brooklyn Civic Riders Bicycle Club
Century Road Club Association
Fast and Fabulous Cycling
Five Borough Bicycle Club
FreeWheels
Kissena Velodrome Coalition
New York Bicycle Messenger Association
New York State Bicycling Coalition
New York Cycle Club

New York City Pedicab Owners Association
Recycle-A-Bicycle
Revolution Rickshaw
Right Of Way
Time's Up!
Transportation Alternatives
Staten Island Bicycle Association
The Weekday Cyclists
Veloprop

March 07, 2007

Hon. Michael R. Bloomberg
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

RE: Cycling Encouragement and the new Transportation Commissioner

Dear Mayor Bloomberg:

The New York City Bicycle Coalition comprises 19 organizations representing over 10,000 member cyclists that have come together to advocate for improved cycling conditions in New York City. We look forward to working with you and the new Department of Transportation (DOT) commissioner and other agencies to fulfill the Action Steps to improve city cycling that your agencies laid out in the 2006 report, "Bicyclist Fatalities and Serious Injuries in New York City," and to provide input as you develop and implement programs to achieve the PLANYC goals for 2030.

We applaud the vision laid out in the initial PLANYC documents and agree that "we cannot let crowding on our subways, streets and sidewalks grind our economy to a halt." In addition, we appreciate your objective of achieving the cleanest air of any big U.S. city and improving travel times by 2030. We wish to remind you that effective promotion of cycling via infrastructure improvements, enhanced enforcement and extensive public outreach is an effective and low-cost way to pursue these goals. Indeed, we believe that it may not be possible to achieve the goals of PLANYC without a significant increase in bicycle use. We hope that the new Transportation Commissioner will play a large role in promoting, encouraging, improving and increasing cycling.

Increased bicycling benefits public health, the city economy and the urban and global environment. More cycling means safer streets, for as the number of cyclists increases, drivers become more used to looking for bikes and safely maneuvering around them, preventing crashes and reducing injuries and deaths. Likewise, any city initiatives that create barriers to bicycling and make it less convenient and more burdensome (e.g., the new parade permit rule, lack of secure bike parking, poor access to car-free bike paths and proposals for mandatory bicycle licensing or requiring adults to wear bike helmets), will discourage cycling and make it more difficult and dangerous for those who continue to ride. The New York City Bicycle Coalition's recommendations are below.

(Over please)

Infrastructure Improvements

As evidenced by the car-free Hudson River Greenway and East River bridge bike paths, improved infrastructure translates to more cyclists. To continue this effort:

- Update the existing Bicycle Master Plan with new routes and New York City cycling design standards applicable to all city streets, and set a tight timetable to implement the entire master plan promptly;
- Within the abovementioned New York City cycling design standards, develop a toolbox of protected bike lanes and intersection-specific safety improvements for cyclists, including colored bike lanes through intersections, green light head starts and sidewalk bulb-outs;
- Increase the amount of physically separated and protected space for cyclists;
- Implement traffic-calming treatments, such as speed humps, elevated crosswalks, and neck-downs that slow turning traffic;
- Accelerate bike rack installation; mandate and/or incentivize indoor bike parking;
- Minimize the number of places where motorized vehicles cross greenway paths;

Enhanced Enforcement

Because police attitudes towards routine violations directly affect driver behavior towards cyclists, the New York City Police Department (NYPD) must be an active partner in efforts to encourage cycling and respect cyclists. Recommendations include:

- Increase enforcement of routine motor vehicle violations such as speeding, reckless driving, opening doors into moving traffic, driving/parking in bike lanes, unsafe passing, cell phone use, failure to exercise due care, etc.;
- Normalize NYPD enforcement so that bicyclists and drivers are treated equitably. Arrest and/or bicycle impoundment are not acceptable actions in response to routine bicycle traffic violations;
- Increase training to ensure NYPD officers understand the laws that apply to cyclists and do not issue faulty or low quality tickets;
- Repeal the City's parade permit rule, which places an administrative burden on organizers of formal bike rides and inhibits informal rides and discourages cycling.

Public Outreach

The upcoming "Look" bike safety public awareness campaign will emphasize cyclists' right to the road. Further ways to involve the public and to strengthen ongoing outreach efforts include:

- Develop a formal process to facilitate public involvement on cycling issues, including, but not limited to, holding quarterly public meetings and hiring public outreach personnel dedicated full-time to cycling issues;
- Increase active Mayoral involvement in encouraging cycling and promoting the attitude that cycling is an everyday activity and that cyclists have the right to the road;

The transition at DOT is an opportunity to elevate the importance of cycling on the City's transportation agenda. We urge you to ensure that the new transportation commissioner is committed to sustainable transportation, grasps the connections between cycling and the PLANYC long-term goals, and will work proactively in the coming years to improve the cycling environment in New York City.

Please contact Noah Budnick at 212-629-8080 to arrange a date and time to discuss the Coalition's recommendations.

Sincerely,
New York City Bicycle Coalition