

Transportation ALTERNATIVES MAGAZINE



Lessons From Europe

INSIDE:
East River Bridges Bike Boom
Pedestrian Fatalities Drop
New Tolls Report

**Transportation
ALTERNATIVES**

The Advocates for Bicycling, Walking and Sensible Transportation

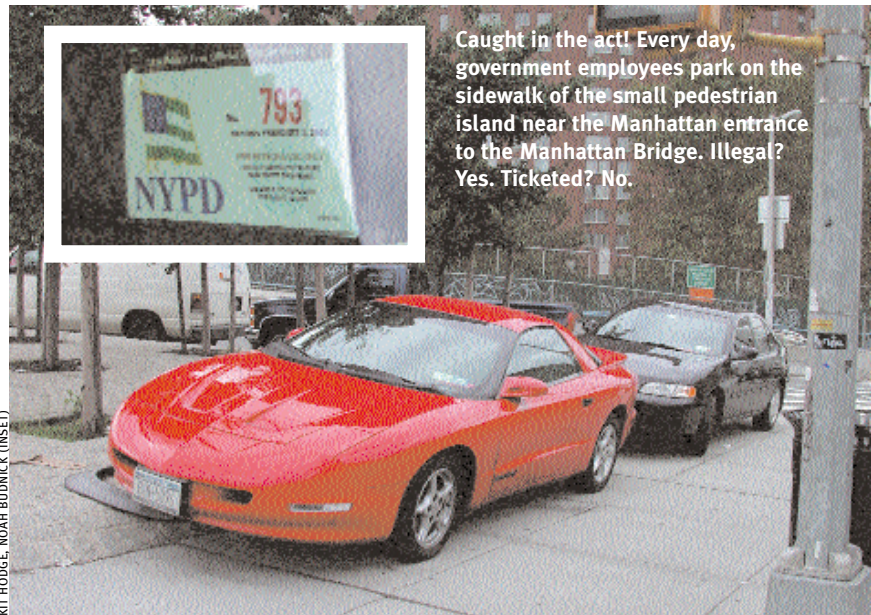
Provocateur

Selfish, Unfair Parking Scam Hurts New York City

Free parking for city employees is absurd. It clogs streets, penalizes truckers and endangers bicyclists

WHAT IS WRONG WITH AN unattended, double parked truck getting a ticket for \$115? Nothing, unless the truck is near a police precinct, firehouse or government building in the city. In these places, the private cars of policemen, firemen, teachers and other government employees park everywhere, including on the sidewalks. The vehicles of city employees block commercial vehicle driver access to the curb on hundreds of busy New York City blocks, forcing commercial drivers to double park. When city employees obstruct commercial drivers, they also endanger bicyclists and slow emergency vehicles. That is right: Free parking for cops and firemen keeps those same cops and firemen from getting swiftly to emergencies.

Abused, abundant and absurd, the 110,000 parking permits held by government employees in New York City encourages them to drive to work, and then park illegally. The obvious abuse of government parking permits has caught the eye of City Hall, which has worked to reduce permit parking in Lower Manhattan and negotiated an end to permit parking for teachers. But even the mayor does not seem to be able to do much about police and fire department employees. The police, who control the Parking Enforcement Division, which does most of the ticketing, also blatantly park their private vehicles in bus stops, bus lanes, on sidewalks and in front of fire hydrants; parking in these places would result in a stiff fine and a towed car for the average driver. Last year, the police union called the illegal parking a "courtesy" to which emergency workers are entitled.



KIT HODGE, MOAH BUDNICK (INSET)

A recent study of government permit parking in Downtown Brooklyn commissioned by Councilmember David Yassky and the Atlantic Avenue Betterment Association found that:

- 80% of government permit holders used their permits illegally.
- 70% did not pay into parking meters.
- 50% of available meters were taken by permit holders.
- 40% of cars with permits were parked all day, suggesting an overuse of the right.
- 10% of the government permits had expired.
- 30% of permits were bogus (usually photocopied).

The worst offenders were court workers, the NYPD, the Department of

Correction and the Transit Authority.

Nearly half of the permit users at meters in Downtown Brooklyn were illegal, costing the city nearly \$80,000 a year in revenue.

In addition to creating traffic and safety problems, providing permits to select government employees also creates a sense of unfairness and ultimately reduces public respect for government authority and the law. Public employees should be rewarded with good salaries and the respect of the public. Free parking permits are very costly to the economy and welfare of the city because of the traffic congestion that they create. If the City gives a substantial raise to public employees, it should make the elimination of parking permits a condition of the raise. □

Abused, abundant and absurd, the 110,000 parking permits held by government employees in New York City encourages them to drive to work, and then park illegally.

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The DOT's underfunded Safe Schools program could be a political winner for the Mayor.

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T.A. Seeks Executive Director
 See transalt.org for job posting

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PUBLISHER: John Kaehny

MANAGING EDITOR: Kit Hodge

DESIGNER: Gary Lingard

CONTRIBUTORS: Masami Adachi, Noah Budnick, Aaron Friedman, Annie Hart, Matt Hayworth, Kit Hodge, John Kaehny, Fred Kaimann, Gary Lingard, Ed Matthiack, Neel Scott, Frank Striegl

MESSENGER SERVICES: Thunderball, 212-675-1700

T.A. BOARD OF DIRECTORS: Robert Kotch, *President*; Ken Coughlin, Laurie Falk Davidowitz, Chris Dunn, Walter Hook, John Kaehny, Steve McMaster, Neysa Pranger, Jeff Prant

T.A. STAFF: John Kaehny, *Executive Director*; Noah Budnick, *Projects Director*; Aaron Friedman *Project Coordinator*; Annie Hart, *Volunteer and Membership Coordinator*; Matt Hayworth, *Operations Manager*; Kit Hodge, *Events & Membership Director*; Fred Kaimann, *NJ Coordinator*; Ed Matthiack, *Project Coordinator*; Karla Quintero, *Safe Seniors Coordinator*; Neel Scott, *Campaign Coordinator*; Frank Striegl, *Intern*

COVER PHOTOS: Gary Lingard (f) and Masami Adachi (b)

115 W 30 St, Ste 1207, NY NY 10001-4010
 Tel: 212-629-8080 Fax: 629-8334, info@transalt.org, transalt.org

Land of Opportunities

DOES MAYOR BLOOMBERG KNOW that car and truck drivers strike 15,000 pedestrians and 3,500 bicyclists every year in New York City? Do these very large numbers strike him as a problem? Does he know that of these unfortunate people, many of them children, about 3,700 will suffer severe injuries—lost limbs, brain injuries and the like—that will dramatically alter their lives and require lengthy hospitalization? Perhaps as importantly, does the Mayor know that changing the equation on the streets to make New York City a better and safer place to bicycle and walk is easily in his reach?

In every issue of this magazine and our electronic bulletin, T.A. recommends specific, cost-effective cycling and walking improvements. This issue of the *T.A. Magazine* looks at six things the Dutch and Germans have done to boost

Of course, tolling the East River bridges would do much more than free up money for transforming the streets of New York City and saving thousands of children and adults from death and injury. It would also sharply reduce traffic in long-suffering Downtown Brooklyn and Long Island City and reduce delays for motorists using the bridges.

Unfortunately, it appears that the Mayor's low popularity has scared him away from championing bridge tolls. Until after the next mayoral election at the very least, New York City will keep pouring tens of millions into keeping its expensive bridges free to motorists and truckers. In the meantime, motorists will continue to strike hundreds of children around dangerous schools.

Tolling the East River bridges is a prominent example of the sensible things that New York City could do to

Does the Mayor know that changing the equation on the streets to make New York City a better and safer place to bicycle and walk is easily in his reach?

cycling and walking and reduce injuries and deaths to far lower levels than in New York City or elsewhere in the United States. While Americans obsess about bike helmets, which are worn by 2% of cyclists in Amsterdam, the Germans and Dutch are busy building safe streets that result in a rate of cycling fatalities half as high as in this country. It's not just safety. Older people in Germany and Holland actually walk and bicycle as a normal part of their lives. There, half of the trips by people 75 years and older are on foot or bike. Compare that to just 6% by Americans 65 and older.

So, what is New York City's excuse for being so tough on cyclists and pedestrians? More than half of the households here do not have an automobile and most people get to work by public transit.

It is certainly not a lack of money that perpetuates the carnage and chaos on New York City streets. Consider this: Every year, New York City taxpayers pay \$145 million for the maintenance and reconstruction of the East River bridges. By comparison, thoroughly traffic calming the streets within a block of the 135 most dangerous city schools, which is the intent of the Department of Transportation's promising, but unfunded, "Safe Schools" pedestrian safety program, would cost, at most, \$50 million.

profoundly reshape the city to the benefit of cyclists and pedestrians; other examples include making Central and Prospect Parks car-free and launching a large Safe Routes to School program.

Fortunately, many of these outstanding opportunities will still be available to my successor at T.A. Yes, after more than a decade of triumphs and tribulations, I will be stepping down as T.A.'s executive director in the spring of 2004. Fulfilling as my work here is, I would like to try something new. In the months ahead, I will be working with the T.A. board, staff and volunteers to ensure that there is a smooth transition and that T.A.'s advocacy does not slow.

T.A. has begun speaking to accomplished professionals in our field to find a suitable successor. But if you meet the qualifications listed on the job posting on our Web site, please let us know.

Sincerely,

P.S. Have a happy Thanksgiving and please be generous when you receive T.A.'s special year-end request for support. Your support for better cycling, walking and sensible transportation matters. □

Cycling News

Mayor Opens Interim Manhattan Waterfront Greenway

ON SEPTEMBER 30TH, MAYOR Bloomberg and a platform full of State and City VIPs cut the ribbon and officially opened the interim Manhattan Waterfront Greenway. Mayor Bloomberg emphatically used the word “interim” to describe the new route saying that, “much work remains to be done” before an off-street path is built completely around the island. Indeed, it will be ten years before the City completes reconstruction of the Harlem River Bridges and the greenway constructed on the three-mile stretch beneath them. It may take even longer to create sections of the path near the United Nations and elsewhere on the East Side.

Still, with innovative designs, three miles of new car-free paths and eight new bike lanes, the 32-mile route around Manhattan improves public access to the waterfront and increases opportunities to explore the city by bicycle. New path



NOAH BUONICK

Mayor Bloomberg students from PS5 and City and State VIPs cut the ribbon on the Manhattan Waterfront Greenway. The City will not complete the interim greenway for at least another ten years. Meanwhile, the City deserves praise for its use of innovative designs that make it easier and safer to use the greenway.

markings and signage in many locations also help everyday cyclists navigate crowded and confusing conditions.

The City is using innovative designs that are new to New York City to increase bicyclist safety and convenience and connect short gaps in the route throughout the interim greenway route. City Hall's oversight of the creation of

the Manhattan Waterfront Greenway gave City and State bicycle planners the support they needed to implement these designs. The new greenway route is a boon to everyday cyclists, but it still needs improvements to make average New Yorkers, who generally bike a few times a year, feel comfortable and in the right place. □

City Hall Needs Greenway Working Group



NOAH BUONICK

The busy greenways need better oversight and coordination.

THE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION OF the interim Manhattan Waterfront Greenway was a multi-agency effort. Now, ongoing greenway operations must also be a multi-agency effort. Deputy Mayor Doctoroff worked with planners from the City Planning, Parks and the City and State DOTs to implement the interim route around Manhattan. Now that the Deputy Mayor is familiar with these agencies, civic groups and greenway issues, he needs to create an NYC Greenways Working Group to help address the bicycle and pedestrian conflicts and frequent special event

closures that plague the city's beautiful car-free paths.

Greenways should be safe for all users, bicyclists and pedestrians alike. In particular, on John Finley Walk, the City needs to slow cyclists or create buffered bike lanes on First and Second Avenues, so that cyclists can safely detour around the crowded park. In Riverside Park, the City needs to make pedestrian access to the park safer and create a “preferred path” for bicyclists on the underused trails between 66th and 83rd Streets. Bicycle-pedestrian conflicts on park paths create animosity towards bicyclists and opposition to future cycling improvements.

The City needs to end the regular closings of greenways for “special events” as well as the government and private vehicle parking on greenways. This past spring, the NYPD created a safe and convenient detour for Hudson River Greenway users during Fleet Week. This should be standard

Reporters See Greenway Reality

The City's completion of the Manhattan Waterfront Greenway in August and the Mayor's ribbon cutting ceremony in September piqued the interest of the New York City press. A number of reporters from city newspapers and magazines hopped on their bicycles to check out the interim greenway route. They later reported that they delighted in the off-street sections of the greenway route but lamented riding in traffic, missing turns and weaving through crowds of pedestrians. The City should take a hint from the ink-stained wretches and install more signs and bike lanes to integrate the greenway with the rest of the city's bicycle network of bike lanes and bridge paths. In particular, it needs to install more signs on Dyckman Street, First and Second Avenues and at the East River bridges, which are all less than five minutes away from the new greenway by bike.

practice for the hundreds of festivals, charity races and exhibitions that take place on or near greenway paths. □

TakeAction!

Write Deputy Mayor Doctoroff and urge him to lead a Greenway Working Group.

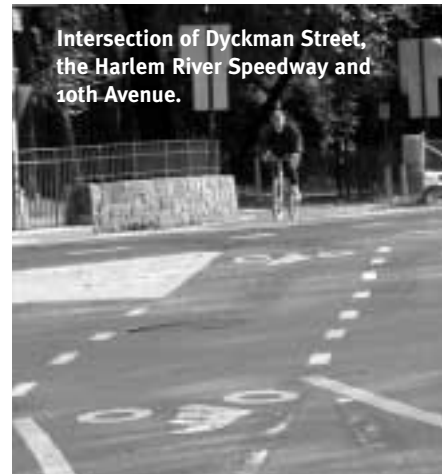
Deputy Mayor Daniel Doctoroff,
City Hall,
New York, NY 10007
Fax: 212-788-2460

Innovative Designs Along the Manhattan Waterfront Greenway

THE MANHATTAN WATERFRONT greenway marks the first time that New York City has used a physically separated bike lane leading to a greenway path, a reverse-flow bike lane, bicycle traffic signals at a greenway entrance and an advanced waiting area for cyclists at an intersection (“bike box”). These designs have proved to be effective in bicycle-

friendly United States cities like Portland (OR), Berkeley, Madison and Cambridge, and large European cities like London, Paris and Amsterdam.

Kudos to the New York City Departments of Transportation, Parks and City Planning and State Department of Transportation for implementing these designs!



Intersection of Dyckman Street, the Harlem River Speedway and 10th Avenue.

Bicycle traffic signal linking a bike lane and greenway

The bicycle traffic signal makes this complicated intersection safer and less confusing for bicyclists, pedestrians and motorists. The bicycle-only phase allows greenway users to get to and from the path without worrying about crossing motor vehicle traffic.

Future uses: Chambers Street at West Street, 23rd Street at 12th Avenue, Forest Park Greenway at Myrtle Avenue (Queens).



Harlem River Greenway entrance at 155th Street and the Harlem River Drive.

Physically separated on-street bike lane

At this entrance, the City installed a bicycle lane that is separated from motorist traffic by concrete barriers. The barriers give bicyclists extra protection and guidance when riding to and from the greenway. This is a particularly good location for a physically separated bike lane because speeding motorists are not necessarily looking for bicyclists as they drive onto the Harlem River Drive.

Future uses: 6th Avenue between 34th and 35th Streets (east side of Herald Square), Manhattan side of Queensboro Bridge, East New York Avenue between Eastern Parkway and Highland Park.

Reverse-flow bike lane on a one-way street

On the northbound service road there is a southbound reverse-flow bike lane that connects the greenway between the Water Club and the East River Greenway at 24th Street. This lane allows bicyclists to ride safely and legally against the flow of motor vehicle traffic. The lane is physically separated from oncoming motor vehicle and bicycle traffic by a concrete barrier.

Future uses: Delancey Street from the Williamsburg Bridge to the East River Greenway, West Broadway from Grand to Walker Street, Brooklyn side of the Williamsburg Bridge (South 5th Street between Kent Street and South 5th Place).



FDR Service Road in the East 20s.



120th Street at 2nd Avenue.

Advanced waiting area for bicyclists at an intersection (“bike box”)

On the west side of the intersection, the DOT installed a “bike box” between the motorist stop line and the crosswalk. This six-foot “bike box” allows bicyclists to cue ahead of motorists at red lights, giving cyclists extra space and time to get up to speed and position themselves in the bike lane across the intersection.

Future uses: Clinton and Joralemon Streets (Brooklyn), 6th Avenue at 42nd Street, Centre Street at Chambers Street.

MANHATTAN WATERFRONT GREENWAY SUPPORTERS

- Transportation Alternatives • East Coast Greenway Alliance • Environmental Defense • Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance
- Municipal Arts Society • Natural Resources Defense Council • Neighborhood Open Space Coalition • New York League of Conservation Voters • NYPIRG/Straphangers Campaign • Regional Plan Association • Tri-State Transportation Campaign

Cycling News

T.A. Launches “Working Cyclists” Program

Safety education for food delivery cyclists and couriers

THE IMAGE OF CYCLISTS AS SIDEWALK riding maniacs who bully and threaten pedestrians poisons political support for cycling. Unfortunately, it has become a New York City stereotype, just like demented cab drivers. In neighborhoods like the Upper East and West Sides, persistent problems with pedestrian-unfriendly cyclists, many of them in a rush to deliver food, has created considerable enmity towards all cyclists. It has also contributed to the city council’s endless attempt to ratchet up the penalties for cycling offenses, and distracted lawmakers and the public from the far more dangerous problem of reckless motor vehicle drivers. In 2002, the city council once again raised the penalty for cycling on the sidewalk, though it did not increase any penalties for driving or parking on sidewalks, or hitting pedestrians in crosswalks. People’s aggravation with sidewalk cycling also fuels opposition to cycling projects and makes city agencies and elected officials more wary of supporting cycling improvements.

In an effort to improve bicyclist and pedestrian safety and improve the image of bicyclists, T.A. has launched the “Working Cyclists: Safety education for couriers and food delivery cyclists” campaign. The goal is to get bicycles off sidewalks and reduce the number of bicycle-pedestrian crashes, injuries and near misses. As part of this campaign, we are working on getting businesses to take responsibility for the actions of their working cyclists.

The Working Cyclists campaign fills an education void. Most working cyclists, many of whom are new immi-



WORKING CYCLISTS

- Do not ride on the sidewalk.
- Ride with traffic.
- Yield to pedestrians.

EMPLOYERS

- You are responsible for the actions of your cyclists.
- Your business suffers when your working cyclists ride dangerously.
- Working cyclists must wear identifying apparel.

grants, receive zero safety training from their employers. Few employers are familiar with the New York City laws that pertain to working cyclists.

T.A. is working with city council members, the NYPD and community



T.A. is teaching working cyclists and their employers about bicycle safety, including respecting pedestrians by staying off sidewalks.

boards to develop materials and target businesses to increase safety. This summer, T.A. developed trilingual, English-Spanish and English-Chinese safety classes, manuals and posters that teach working cyclists and their employers the laws of bike riding in New York City. Over the fall, T.A. will teach safety classes to businesses identified by elected officials, the NYPD, community boards and the public.

The project will initially focus on Midtown Manhattan and the Upper East and West Sides, where sidewalks are jammed with pedestrians and the dangerous behavior of many working cyclists is a chronic problem.

T.A. is looking for bilingual Spanish-English and Chinese-English speakers to work on this program. Contact info@transalt.org or see transalt.org/about/jobs.html#o for more information. □

Street Smart Cycling Tips

- ✓ **Wear a Helmet** New York State law requires children under age 14 to wear helmets. Adults should set a good example and wear helmets whenever they ride a bicycle. Use your brain; you only have one.
- ✓ **Stay Away From Car Doors** Ride four feet away from parked cars, even if it means riding in a whole lane of

traffic. This will reduce the chance of a motorist opening a car door into you.

- ✓ **Never Ride on Sidewalks** When you ride on the sidewalk, you anger and threaten pedestrians and break the law. The police can take away your bicycle and fine you \$300.
- ✓ **Ride With Traffic, Not Against** Riding against traffic is dangerous for you and for pedestrians. If you ride against traffic, you are more likely to

crash with a car or pedestrian and suffer serious injury. Fine: \$55

- ✓ **Report Crashes to the Police** If you are in a crash with a vehicle, car door or pedestrian, call 911. You and the motorist, pedestrian or other bicyclist must stay and provide your names, addresses and telephone numbers for the police.
- ✓ **Give Pedestrians a Break** Yield to pedestrians crossing streets. Stay out of crosswalks when stopped at red lights.

Opportunity Knocks on 8th Ave

Two community boards support proposed bike lane

THE NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT of Transportation can make a breakthrough in improving conditions for bicycling and fill a huge missing link in the City's bicycle network by installing a bike lane on the three miles of 8th Avenue from 14th Street to Columbus Circle. An 8th Avenue bike lane is supported by Community Board Four (Chelsea, Clinton, Hell's Kitchen), Community Board Five (Midtown), T.A. and five hundred bicyclists who sent postcards of support to DOT Commissioner Iris Weinshall.

It is not often that one, let alone two, New York City community boards support the installation of a new bike lane, especially on a major street like 8th Avenue. Community board support for new lanes is tepid, especially in neighborhoods where sidewalk cycling is a serious problem. So the DOT should look at this strong support from Community Boards Four and Five as a rare opportunity. In March, Community Board Four wrote to DOT Manhattan Borough Commissioner Margaret Forgiione:

"We urge you and your colleagues to conduct the study and data collection necessary to facilitate the re-striping of Eighth Avenue to accommodate the bicycle lane recommended in the New York City Bicycle Master Plan."

And in July, Community Board Five passed a resolution (28-0, with one abstention) supporting the proposed 8th Avenue bike lane.

Filling the Bike Lane Gap


An 8th Avenue bike lane from 14th Street to Columbus will fill a gaping hole in the on-street network. It will create a continuous eight-mile long on-street lane in the center of Manhattan connecting the existing bike lanes on Hudson Street (from Dominick to 14th Street) and Central Park West/Frederick Douglass Boulevard (from 63rd Street to 121st Street).

A new bike lane on 8th Avenue will embolden less experienced cyclists who rely solely on the Hudson River

TakeAction!

Write to DOT Commissioner Weinshall and urge the agency to install a bike lane on 8th Avenue!


Iris Weinshall, Commissioner
 NYC Department of Transportation
 40 Worth Street
 New York, NY 10013



In October 2001, the NYC DOT striped the 3-mile Central Park West bike lane, which connects to the 3-mile St. Nicholas bike lane.



T.A., Community Boards 4 and 5 and 550 cyclists who sent postcards to DOT Commissioner Weinshall are asking the DOT to bridge the 2-mile gap and install a new bike lane on 8th Avenue.



In May 1997, the NYC DOT striped the 1.5-mile Hudson Street bike lane.



Greenway to make the transition to city streets. It will also provide a safer alternative to the sub-standard 6th Avenue bike lane. The new bike lane

will help tame traffic, make 8th Avenue safer for bicycling and the traveling public and reduce sidewalk cycling. □

DOT Takes Second Look At Manhattan Bridge Access

MOUNTING PRESSURE FROM T.A. and a bevy of elected officials, community groups and bridge users has prompted the DOT to reexamine bicyclist and pedestrian safety on the Brooklyn side of the Manhattan Bridge. In September, the DOT told Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz that it is studying the intersection of the Manhattan Bridge off-ramp and Jay Street. To the DOT's credit, this fresh look at Manhattan Bridge access is a one-hundred-eighty-degree switch from its position in June, when the agency rejected T.A.'s request for safety improvements. Markowitz, City Councilmember Yassky, State Senator Connor, Recycle-A-Bicycle, the Brooklyn Bridge Park Coalition and the Brooklyn Waterfront Greenway Taskforce all called on the DOT to make bridge access safer for bicyclists and pedestrians.

T.A., Borough President Markowitz and a coalition of elected officials and civic groups call on the DOT to make bridge access safe for bicyclists and pedestrians. The coalition wants the agency to install its own 1996 plan, which includes stop and pedestrian signs and a crosswalk near the path entrance on Jay Street.



ED MATHACK

In July, T.A., with the help of students from Recycle-A-Bicycle, surveyed 190 Manhattan Bridge path users and found that 80% use Jay Street (from Downtown Brooklyn and points south) to get to the bridge's bicycle and pedestrian path, 20% come from Sands Street and the north and 0% walk or bike on the DOT's signed route, which takes a quarter-mile detour from Jay Street to Tillary Street to

the Adams Street service road to Sands and back to Jay to the path.

Next year, when the DOT opens a second path on east side of the Manhattan Bridge, the vast majority of bicyclists will use Jay Street to access the new path. The entrance to the new path will be on southeast corner of Sands and Jay Streets and, unless the DOT makes safety improvements, bicyclists and pedestrians will still have to contend with the dangerous motorists who race down the Manhattan Bridge's off-ramp onto Jay Street. □

TakeAction!

Write to DOT Commissioner Iris Weinsall to thank the DOT for conducting a new survey and ask her agency to make it safe to walk and bike to the Brooklyn side of the Manhattan Bridge.

Iris Weinsall, Commissioner
NYC Department of Transportation
40 Worth Street
New York, NY 10013



Mayor's Verrazano Vision

On the October 3rd broadcast of his weekly radio show, Mayor Bloomberg said that people should be able to walk and bike across the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge, and that he is pushing the MTA to recognize the importance of building a bicycle and pedestrian path on the bridge. Unfortunately, the mayor failed to mention how to fund this project. A 1997 NYC Department of City Planning study estimated that it would cost \$30 to \$40 million to build a new biking and

walking path across the Verrazano. Opened in 1964, and connecting Staten Island and South Brooklyn, the 9,100 foot long suspension bridge (the second longest in the world) has never had a bicycle and pedestrian path.

Landmarks Commission, DOT Work Toward Removing Oppressive Chain Link

On September 23rd, the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission held a hearing to solicit comments about the DOT's plan to install a seven-foot tall chain link fence along the entire length of the Queensboro Bridge's bicycle and pedestrian path. If installed, this fence will be aestheti-

cally disastrous and would demoralize and discourage people from walking and biking over the Queensboro Bridge. This would make the path less safe and further discourage people from walking and biking. The logical compromise is to replace the existing seven-foot, dilapidated chain link fences with nicer, non-chain link fences on the portions of the bridge path that pass over Manhattan, Roosevelt Island and Queens and leave the existing four-and-a-half-foot non-chain link fences untouched on the sections of the path that pass over the East River. Landmarks Commission Chairman

Robert Tierney concluded the hearing by saying that the Commission, which must approve the DOT's final design, will work with the agency to find a



workable solution that preserves the historic and aesthetic characteristics of the landmark Queensboro Bridge. The long-term implications of the final design are significant. In a

June 2002 New York Times article about chain link fencing on East River bridge bicycle and pedestrian paths, a DOT spokesman said, "...when renovations are inevitably done to the [landmark] Brooklyn Bridge promenade ... chain-link fencing would be installed."

Bridge Bicycle Boom!

ACCORDING TO THE DOT, THE number of bicyclists using the East River bridges is the highest since it began counting twenty years ago. On an average fall weekday in 2003, 4,000 people biked across the East River bridges between 7 am and 7 pm compared to 1,100 in 1980. This increase in bridge traffic suggests a growth in citywide commute and utilitarian bicycle trips.

The East River bridge bicycle paths are the backbone of New York City's bicycle network. They connect residential neighborhoods in Brooklyn and Queens with jobs, schools and other destinations in Manhattan.

In 2001, the City opened all of the East River bridge paths to cyclists and pedestrians for the first time in fifty years. The restoration of the bicycle and pedestrian paths on the Williamsburg and Manhattan bridges that year helped draw an additional 1,500 weekday bicyclists to the bridges.

This surge in bridge use hints at the potential for yet more bicycling that the City could foster with safe

and convenient street approaches to bridge paths. The Brooklyn side of the Manhattan and Brooklyn bridges and the Manhattan side of the Queensboro Bridge need immediate attention. The dangerous traffic and inconvenient entrances at these bridges discourage cycling. The good news is that the DOT is taking a fresh look at the Manhattan Bridge (see facing page). The agency should also work with the Department of

City Planning to make access safer at the other East River bridges.

Connections between bridges and bike lanes and greenways will also increase bicycling. The

DOT should start by connecting the Manhattan side of the Williamsburg Bridge with the East River Greenway at Delancey Street and the Manhattan side of the Brooklyn Bridge with the Hudson River Greenway at Chambers Street. New Yorkers who are not

everyday cyclists should not need a map to ride the short distance between these bridges and greenways. □



Thanks in part to the restoration of the bicycle and pedestrian paths on the Manhattan and Williamsburg bridges, bicycling has increased dramatically. A record number of New Yorkers are using the paths to commute to work.

GARY LINGARD

TakeAction!

Write to DOT Commissioner Weinsahl and ask her to improve safety and connections near the East River bridges.

Iris Weinsahl, Commissioner
NYC Department of Transportation
40 Worth Street
New York, NY 10013

CityRacks! Where Are You?

This summer, the DOT's CityRacks program installed 216 new bike racks; it installed 216 the previous summer. There is a shortage of demand for bike parking at subway stations like the Bedford Avenue L train in Williamsburg, Brooklyn and Union Square in Manhattan as well as at educational and cultural institutions around the city. CityRacks needs to install more racks now and work with educational and cultural institutions to create secure bike parking for employees, students and visitors.

To request a free CityRack, go to transalt.org/cityracks, call 212-442-7687 or write to City Racks, 40 Worth Street, Room 1035, New York, NY 10013

State DOT Agrees to Remove Hudson River Greenway Stop Signs By November

By the time you read this, either the illegal stop signs on the Hudson River Greenway will be gone or T.A. will be preparing to return to court to demand that the State DOT immediately remove the signs. This fall, after much negotiation between T.A.'s legal counsel and the State Attorney General's Office (on behalf of the State DOT), T.A. agreed to give the State DOT and its contractor until November to complete their promised installation of new bicycle traffic signals and remove the illegal stop signs that dot the Hudson River Greenway. Until that time, the suit is in



adjournment. T.A. plans to bring the suit back to court if the stop signs are not removed by November. The real solution to ending conflict between turning motorists and

greenway users is to redesign the intersections on the path to slow the motorists using raised intersection at each driveway.

Williamsburg Bridge Users Tell DOT to Remove the Bumps

During the summer and fall, T.A. members and volunteers continued to inundate the DOT with hundreds of requests to remove the danger-

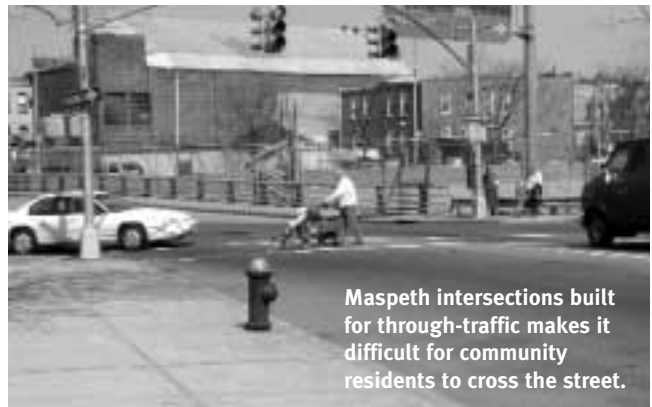
ous bumps on the Williamsburg Bridge bicycle and pedestrian path. Despite the concerned letters and e-mails about injuries and damage to bicycles inflicted by the bumps that it received, the DOT still refuses to replace the bumps with more gentle expansion joint covers. The bumps are a major obstacle to everyday cycling because they are difficult, painful and damaging to ride over. The bumps also appear to violate the Americans with Disabilities Act. This summer, the Eastern Paralyzed Veterans Association wrote to the DOT and stated that, "Many people with mobility impairments, including wheelchair and scooter users, cannot get over those metal bands, effectively preventing them from pedestrian use of the Williamsburg Bridge."

Reclaiming the Streets

T.A. Unveils Traffic Calming Recommendations for Maspeth and Jackson Heights



T.A.'s traffic calming recommendations for Maspeth include corner extensions.



Maspeth intersections built for through-traffic makes it difficult for community residents to cross the street.

THANKS TO A GRANT FROM the New York Community Trust, T.A. has been able to retain internationally known traffic calming expert Michael King to work with community groups in Queens to reduce traffic and traffic-related noise on their streets.

Maspeth: Community Disrupted by the Long Island Expressway

In Maspeth, T.A. and King teamed with the Juniper Park Civic Association to address roadway noise, traffic safety and community livability at the intersections of Grand Avenue, 69th Street and the Long Island Expressway. Grand Avenue is the commercial

spine of Maspeth and features playgrounds, bus stops, plazas and fire houses. The Long Island Expressway cuts through and disrupts this community nexus with its service roads, trucks and noise.

To mitigate the negative effect of the Long Island Expressway, T.A., King and community leaders developed an extensive set of recommendations, including sidewalk widenings, corner extensions and new signal timing and markings that will work together to traffic calm the area. The community board and city councilmember have responded enthusiastically to the recommendations. Now it is up to the Department of Transportation to implement them.

Jackson Heights: Intrusive Trucks, Parking and Noise

In Jackson Heights, T.A. worked with a new group, Coalition for a Quiet Jackson Heights, to document problems that contribute to heavy traffic and horn honking. The study found that heavy truck and livery cab traffic is aggravated by double parking caused by low parking fees and a lack of enforcement of all types of illegal parking. Among other things, the T.A. report recommends raising parking fees, installing Muni-Meters and widening sidewalks and corner crossings.

Read the reports at transalt.org/info/maspethfinal030904.pdf and transalt.org/info/jacksonheightsdraft030831.pdf. □

Vendors Clogging City Sidewalks

AS ANYONE WHO HAS RECENTLY tried to make their way through Harlem, Times Square or SoHo knows, there has been an explosion of street vendors hogging the scarce sidewalk space on New York City streets. Since the recent expiration of a 1998 regulatory statute, vendors, who number in the hundreds, have been able to set up shop wherever they please. Compounding the problem, so-called First Amendment vendors, who sell books, newspapers and art, have followed regular vendors back onto the sidewalks. The addition of yet more street vendors has led to the



The number of sidewalk vendors, like these men in Midtown Manhattan, has greatly increased. More sidewalk vendors means even less sidewalk space in heavily traveled areas.

appearance of mini-bazaars on New York City's already crowded sidewalks. The current situation amounts to a free-for-all that compromises pedestrian safety and punishes tax-paying businesses.

Comprehensive legislation that gives New York City's sidewalks back to pedestrians and regulates all vendors is needed to sort out this mess. Supposedly, legislation is pending in Albany. But lawmakers need to act fast and decisively to squelch this problem, and give New York City's sidewalks back to its residents. □

Community Demands Safer Grand Army Plaza Crossings

AT THE EPICENTER OF THE pedestrian disaster called Grand Army Plaza in Brooklyn is the intersection of the Plaza and Flatbush Avenue. The intensely busy crossing consistently ranks as one of the most dangerous in New York City, averaging more than 200 crashes of all kinds a year. Unfortunately, crossing hazardous Flatbush Avenue at that intersection is unavoidable for the many people walking from the main Brooklyn Public Library to Prospect Park or from Prospect Heights to the park.



The current design of Grand Army Plaza in Brooklyn exposes park users to dangerous speeding and reckless drivers. This design is especially dangerous for the many families with small children who regularly visit the park.

pedestrians more time to cross as well as to build up the pedestrian island at Flatbush Avenue.

Brooklyn resident and T.A. member, Mike Dowd, and his group, the Prospect Heights Parents Association, have partnered with Transportation Alternatives to do something about the atrocious conditions at the Flat-

bush Avenue crossing. In July, our groups gathered 1,500 signatures in five hours on a petition demanding a safer crossing for pedestrians. The DOT says that it is listening. The agency promises to change the traffic signal timing at the intersection to give

Jeff Prant, "Grand Army Plaza is the culmination of 50 years of city planning that puts automobiles first." Fixing the historic mistakes made there will take time, money and political will. □

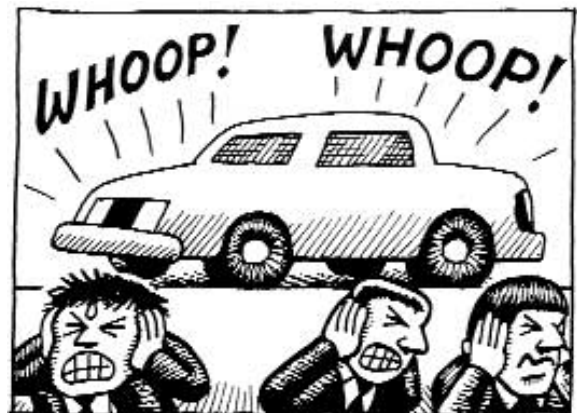
Decisive Hearing on Car Alarm Ban Nears

UNIQUELY INEFFECTIVE IN DETERING theft, car alarms have been an obnoxious part of New York City life for almost thirty years. Calls to silence the alarms have been strong since 1992, but spurious legal issues and pressure from out-of-town car alarm industry lobbyists have prevented the city council from taking effective action.

Now, thanks to Councilmember Eva Moskowitz and T.A.'s strong advocacy, sleep-deprived New Yorkers may finally get some relief. On December 11th, Moskowitz's Int. 448 will get a crucial second hearing in the city council. Twenty-one councilmembers from across the city already co-sponsor a car alarm ban. Just a few more could make car alarm

sales, installation and use a distant, unpleasant memory.

Sleepers, readers, schoolchildren, the elderly and nearly everyone else stand to benefit from the peace of a car alarm-free city. The approximately 235 people working as car alarm installers will also gain, as car owners



Typical, current prices for audible and silent car security devices in New York City.

SECURITY DEVICE, FULLY INSTALLED	PRICE
Audible car alarm (with siren)	\$229
Silent car alarm (with pager)	\$289
Silent immobilizer	\$195
Pager to replace existing siren	\$175

flock to them for silent anti-theft products once audible alarms are banned. Silent pagers and immobilizers are more effective than alarms, giving owners better security and a bigger insurance discount at a very low cost (see chart). Or, drivers can comply with the law by going to the dealer and switching off their alarm—for free.

A car alarm ban is a win for everyone. Come show your support at the crucial city council hearing on Int. 448.

**Thursday, December 11th, 10 am
Council Chambers at City Hall**

Safe Streets

New York City Pedestrian Fatalities at Historic Low

TUCKED AWAY INSIDE a routine October 2nd press release from the Department of Transportation was the startling announcement that, according to preliminary figures, motorists killed 102 pedestrians in New York City during the first nine months of this year.

Although it is unquestionably a grievous loss of human life, the fatality figure is significantly lower than ever before and far lower than a decade ago.

In 1993, motorists killed 214 pedestrians during the same period. If this year's trend continues, New York City will finish 2003 with fewer than 140 pedestrian fatalities. The previous historic low was in 1998, when police reported 183 pedestrians killed.

Pedestrian fatalities have declined steadily since about 1990, when motorists killed 365 pedestrians. Since then, the Department of Transportation has improved safety at the 100 most dangerous pedestrian crossings.



At some crossings, like Herald and Times Square, the agency has re-engineered streets with wider sidewalks, narrowed roadways and turn restrictions. At many crossings, including Queens Boulevard (aka "The Boulevard of Death"), the DOT has improved lighting, extended crossing times and placed fences on medians to reduce jaywalking.

The police department has improved and focused its traffic law enforcement through TrafficStat; the program has allowed the DOT to be faster at fixing dangerous locations. And, the reduction in crime has freed more police for traffic enforcement.

But these longer term safety measures do not help explain why motorists have killed such a relatively low number of walkers this year. Last year, motorists killed 184 pedestrians (the second lowest year ever). So, why are pedes-

trian deaths down by 24% in one year? Is it luck? Steady improvements in emergency medical care? Reductions in motorist speeding? We do not know.

NYC Pedestrian Injuries Remain Around 15,000 Per Year

WHILE PEDESTRIAN FATALITIES HAVE plummeted, the number of walkers struck by motor vehicles drivers has changed very little over the decade: 14,732 in 1991 versus 15,009 in 2001. (Note: This is actually a slight improvement, since the population of the City increased by 9.4% between 1990 and 2000, so the percentage of the population struck every year has declined a bit.) The question is why do motorists continue to strike so many, but kill so few? One explanation is that drivers are striking pedestrians while traveling at lower speeds. This explanation would make sense if the number of serious pedestrian injuries is also declining sharply, but this is information T.A. does not have at the moment. □

Traffic Tickets Save Lives

CAR-DRIVING WHINERS OFTEN complain that traffic tickets only function as a cash cow to line city coffers and have no real safety function. A new study in the June 28, 2003 issue of the prestigious British medical journal, "The Lancet," proves this claim to be simply not true. It shows that, in fact, traffic tickets save lives. The study, which analyzed 8,975 licensed drivers who had been involved in fatal crashes in Ontario in the previous 11 years, found that getting a traffic ticket lowered by 35% the driver's chance of a fatal crash in the month following the ticket. The study also found that a conviction for a serious traffic violation and points on the offender's license reduced

Speed cameras help the police department greatly increase its traffic ticket output and speeding enforcement, saving lives and making streets safer.

the driver's fatal crash risk by 50% in the month following the ticket. The researchers concluded that, "more frequent enforcement ... could immediately prevent a large amount of death, disability and health-care demands." In other words, this study proves that speed cameras (see facing page)—which would allow the New York City police department to increase greatly its traffic ticket output and speeding enforcement—would also save lives and make streets safer in the process.



Speed Facts

- According to a report by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, speed-related crashes cost Americans approximately \$40 billion a year.
- Each year, more than 15,000 Americans die in speed-related crashes, and 80,000 people are seriously injured.
- The chance of death when struck by a car at 40 mph is 70%; at 30 mph, 40%; and at 25 mph, 25%. □

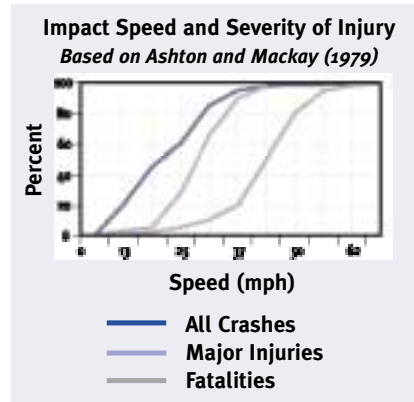
Speed Cameras Prove Huge Success in D.C.

THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA Metropolitan Police Department recently released the results of its two year-old speed camera enforcement program, and the results are staggering proof that speed cameras lower speeds and save lives.

In the first 25 months of its speed camera program, D.C. issued \$34 million in fines and 651,000 infraction notices. New York City, a city of 8.1 million, compared to D.C.'s 550,000, issues only approximately 100,000 speeding summons each year. In 2002 alone, D.C. officers using speed cameras nabbed 408 drivers for extreme speeding, up from a mere 75 in 2000 (pre-speed cameras). These numbers are directly related to street safety: Between 2001 and 2002, traffic fatalities fell by 30%, from 71 to 50; aggressive speeding by an eye-opening 75%; and average speeds in 25 mph zones by an impressive 8 mph.

Law enforcement agencies in more than 75 countries around the world have used speed cameras for upwards of 30 years, with similarly impressive results. The public supports speed cameras. A 1997 survey by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration found that 70% of respondents supported the use of speed cameras. An even larger number of drivers—80%—supported speed cameras at frequent-

D.C.'s automatic speed cameras caught 408 drivers for extreme speeding using speed cameras in 2001. This helped reduce traffic fatalities by 30%, from 71 to 50; aggressive speeding by 75%; and average speeds in 25 mph zones by 8 mph.



crash zones, and 90% supported speed cameras in school zones.

But despite the documented public support, these impressive safety results and a drastic need for cameras at high-profile drag strips and pedestrian death traps, New York City currently has no speed cameras, and the campaign to get them is in bureaucratic and legislative limbo. T.A. has long advocated a citywide speed camera program similar to

New York City's highly effective and praised red light camera program, in which 50 cameras—soon to be 100—catch deadly red-light runners around the city. To their credit, Mayor Bloomberg and the New York City

Department of Transportation have also been persistent advocates for red light and speed cameras. However, Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver of Lower Manhattan has allowed years of foot-dragging by upstate assemblymembers on speed cameras despite his powerful position, which means that it may be years before New Yorkers see the safety benefits of these cameras.

What New York City should be doing:

- The Mayor and Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver need to push strong to pass speed camera legislation in Albany.
- The City should unveil an anti-speeding advertising campaign similar to San Francisco's recent highly successful campaign.
- The NYPD should put all traffic statistics, including pedestrian injuries and death, online.

Unfair? Big Brother? No.

- Alleged violators still have the chance to argue their case in court.
- All citations would be mailed within six business days of the alleged offense, reasonable notice also given in other locations.
- Only the license plates of speeding vehicles are photographed.
- The motoring public is accustomed to red light camera, and approves of them. Speed cameras are no different. □

NYC Safety Ads Stuck

The City of San Francisco recently launched a hard-hitting traffic safety media campaign. It hired a marketing firm to create bus shelter posters that remind motorists that speeding kills. New York City should follow suit and create a prominent "Kill Your Speed, Not a Child" safety campaign.



[Speed cameras are] "a major element in our overall strategy to prevent needless injuries and deaths on the streets of the District of Columbia by reducing the number of aggressive driving incidents."

Metropolitan Police Chief Charles H. Ramsey

Sensible Transportation

T.A. and Straphangers Release Major New Toll Study

Groups find East River bridge tolls would cut traffic in Downtown Brooklyn and Long Island City

AT THE END OF SEPTEMBER, THE NYPIRG Straphangers Campaign and Transportation Alternatives issued a comprehensive 58-page report assessing the revenue, traffic, mobility and equity impacts of tolling the City's currently free East River bridges. The report was prepared by Bruce Schaller, a widely-respected transportation analyst who has worked for MTA New York City Transit and the Taxi and Limousine Commission. It synthesizes a vast amount of data covering traffic patterns, speeds, travel surveys and other sources.

The report concludes that tolling the bridges offers compelling benefits to New York City, including reduced traffic congestion in the Downtown

A new report by T.A. and the Straphangers Campaign shows that tolls on the City's East River bridges would reduce traffic in neighborhoods around the bridges.

Brooklyn and Long Island City neighborhoods surrounding the bridges and on the bridges themselves as well as significant revenue for expensive bridge repair and maintenance.

The report makes a number of other key points. First, the City's East River bridges are very expensive to maintain. Second, technology has made huge toll plazas obsolete and allows motorists to



MASAMI ADACHI

pay tolls without stopping or having to set up a toll account in advance. This means that no cash lanes are needed. Finally, the report again confirms that East River bridge users are much more affluent than transit riders or the general public. In recent months, the Independent Budget Office and Bridge Toll Advocacy Project have also released

reports that use different methodologies but reach similar conclusions as the T.A./Straphangers report. Read the entire report at transalt.org/info/tollreport.pdf.

Despite the overwhelming consensus of all three reports that East River bridge tolls would be a big plus for New York City, there is limited political momentum for them. Mayor Bloomberg championed new tolls to solve the City's budget problems. But his low standing in public opinion polls and the fast approaching mayoral election campaign have prompted him to back away from tolls for the moment. Still, given that the City faces a \$2 billion budget deficit in 2004 despite new taxes as well as persistent traffic congestion on and near the bridges, the argument for tolls remains stronger than ever. □

Community Support

Toll opponents fear that tolls would reduce patronage at restaurants and other retail establishments in neighborhoods near the bridges, like Downtown Brooklyn and Long Island City. But prominent community groups like the Brooklyn Heights Association have already leant their support to tolling the City-owned East River bridges. Though information to assess the full economic impact of tolls does not currently exist, local businesses and community groups should look to the overwhelmingly positive response of London's once-skeptical businesses to the city's congestion charging program. In a survey of companies conducted by a London business organization, 49% said that they believed that congestion charging is working, 35% remained undecided and 16% thought that it is not working. When asked about the economic impacts of congestion charging, 17% believed that the impact on the overall London economy has been positive, 15% believed it to be negative and 66% responded that they were neutral or that it was too early to tell.

Big Toll Myths Busted

? MYTH: The City-owned East River bridges are free.

REALITY: "Free" bridges cost taxpayers a bundle. Tolling them will raise much needed money for maintaining the bridges and improving the city's public transportation system.

■ "Free" bridges cost \$600 million to maintain and operate and \$1.62 billion to rebuild over the last decade.

■ "Free" bridges cost \$600 million to maintain and operate and \$833 million to rebuild over the next decade.

■ Tolls will raise between \$482 million and \$522 million for NYC.

■ Tolls will raise between \$58 and \$106 million for the MTA.

? MYTH: "Free" bridge crossings help ease congestion and decrease travel times.

REALITY: "Free" bridges cause traffic congestion and increase travel time.

■ Traffic on the free East River bridges has increased 20% since 1981, compared to only 6% on tolled crossings.

■ Traffic on the "free" East River bridges has increased travel time, particularly on neighborhood streets surrounding the bridges.

■ Tolling the East River bridges would reduce traffic on the bridges by 24-26%.

Sensible Transportation

Tolls Would Reduce Traffic in Downtown Brooklyn, Long Island City and Canal Street

A MAJOR BENEFIT OF BRIDGE TOLLS IS REDUCING TRAFFIC congestion on surrounding streets. In both Downtown Brooklyn and Long Island City a substantial portion of traffic on neighborhood streets are motorists who use the “free” bridges. Residents in these neighborhoods must put up

with the noise and filth of the daily through-traffic. And local businesses must contend with obstructed access to limited loading and unloading space as well as slow travel times to other parts of the city. Tolls will reduce traffic congestion in Downtown Brooklyn and Long Island City by 12-14%.



KIT HODGE



FRANK STRIEGL



KIT HODGE

Downtown Brooklyn

East River bridge-bound motor vehicle traffic comprises 43% of all motor vehicle traffic entering Downtown Brooklyn during the morning rush hour and 45% during the midday.

Tolls on the bridges would reduce the number of vehicles entering Downtown Brooklyn by 12%. This means that traffic per day will be reduced by the following amounts:

- 1,300 on Hicks Street
- 1,400 on Court Street
- 1,000 on Smith Street
- 800 on Clinton Street

Long Island City

Fifty-seven percent of the motor vehicle traffic entering the area during the morning peak hour is bound for the Queensboro Bridge.

Tolls would reduce the number of vehicles entering Long Island City during the morning peak by 14%. This means that traffic in the area between the hours of 8 and 9 am will be reduced by the following approximate amounts:

- 390 on Thomson Avenue
- 280 on 21st Street
- 180 on Queens Boulevard

Canal Street

Currently, many truckers avoid the one-way, Staten Island-bound toll on the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge by using the Manhattan Bridge instead. Trucks that divert to Manhattan add to severe traffic congestion on Canal Street, a heavily traveled commercial street in Chinatown, and at approaches to the Holland Tunnel.

Instituting tolls on the East River bridges would reduce the incentive for truckers to avoid the Verrazano, and thus reduce traffic congestion and air pollution on Canal Street. □



TRI-STATE TRANSPORTATION CAMPAIGN

Fast, Automated Toll Collection Already a Success in NYC and London

The traffic impact of tolls on neighborhoods surrounding the City-owned East River bridges is a key issue. In discussions of tolls in the 1970s and 1980s, it was difficult to imagine implementing tolls because of fears of giant toll plazas and huge traffic jams. But advances in tolling technology mean that motorists can be tolled without toll plazas or having to stop their vehicles. East River bridge tolls would use a combination of E-ZPass, which is used by more than half of New York City area motorists, and London-style license plate cameras for non-E-ZPass motorists.

MYTH: Tolling requires toll plazas and cash, and will cause traffic backups.

REALITY: Modern “non-stop” toll collection technology does not require toll plazas, cash or traffic backups.

■ By using a combination of E-ZPass and London-style license plate cameras and instant payment systems, no cash lanes

and no toll plazas would be needed. Traffic would not need to stop to pay tolls.

MYTH: Tolling the bridges discriminates against low-income New Yorkers.

REALITY: Tolls would have little impact on low-income New Yorkers.

■ Motorists crossing the bridges

are skewed toward the upper income ranges. Lower income New Yorkers are far more likely to take public transportation—and pay the recently increased subway and bus fare—than to use the bridges. Thus, equity considerations support the argument that bridge users should, like transit riders, pay for what they use.

■ 8% of bridge users have household incomes under \$25,000, compared with 16% of transit riders using the subway, bus or commuter rail to cross the East River.

■ At the other end of the income scale, 21% of bridge users but only 16% of transit riders crossing the East River have incomes over \$100,000.

Parks

We Support a Car-Free Central Park!

IN ADDITION TO THE 60,000 NEW YORKERS WHO HAVE signed the car-free Central Park petition, a host of notables and prominent civic groups have raised their voices in support of T.A.'s car-free park campaigns. Here are some of our favorite voices.



“Do we really have to say again, and yet again, that automobiles deteriorate and degrade not only the park but our lives and larger landscape? In this period of evolving environmental consciousness, in an era in which cities become more and more attractive as recreation centers, and an epoch when sprawl and global warming require us to enhance our greenery and livability, it is worse than myopic of city officials to allow New York’s great public space to become a brutalized race track.”

—JANE HOLTZ KAY, *author of Asphalt Nation and Architecture Critic for The Nation.*

“I enthusiastically endorse the campaign to close Central Park’s loop drive to regular automobile traffic. We had the same sort of fight in Washington Square Park in the late 1950s and in my neighborhood here in Toronto a couple of years ago: same prediction of traffic chaos, same result of no chaos, diminished traffic counts and no counts increased elsewhere in consequence. A trial, with traffic counts on the Central Park perimeter streets, will be more per-

suasive than any amount of talk, letter-writing, resolutions, and other endless wheel-spinning.”

—JANE JACOBS, *author of the classic The Death and Life of Great American Cities, which the New York Times has described as “perhaps the most influential single work in the history of town planning.”*

“Central Park was intended to be a landscape of tranquility set apart from the dynamism of the great city around it. Introducing motor cars to its original carriage drives, and then altering the road geometries to suit them, was one of the great blunders of civic design in the 20th century. The good news is that the 20th century is now over, and we no longer have to feel any undue proprietary investment in the stupid decisions of previous generations. We could hardly make a better statement of purpose in this new century than to ban cars from Central Park.”

—JAMES HOWARD KUNSTLER, *noted author of Home From Nowhere, The Geography of Nowhere, and The City in Mind.*

“Olmsted and Vaux went to great lengths to ensure that commercial traffic could cross the park with the least visual impact, by sinking the four transverse roads. Today, the presence of cars on what were intended to be leisurely carriage drives within the park seriously compromises their vision of a place to escape the bustle of the city. Cars are simply too large, too noisy, and too fast.

—WITOLD RYBCZYNSKI, *author of A Clearing in the Distance: Frederick Law Olmsted and America in the Nineteenth Century.*

Statement of the American Lung Association of the City of New York

Each day, thousands of New Yorkers exercise along Central Park’s Loop Drive.

Unfortunately, vehicles are still permitted on the Loop Drive during the workweek, forcing park users to exercise within dangerous proximity to cars emitting harmful pollutants that include ozone, carbon monoxide, fine particles, sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide.

These pollutants are particularly dangerous when people are exercising, because more air is being breathed and the air is drawn deeper into the lungs. Furthermore, during heavy exercise, people breathe more through their mouths and

therefore bypass the body’s first line of defense against pollution — the

nose. As a result of these increased dangers, the American Lung Association has long recommended that people avoid congested streets and rush hour traffic when exercising, as pollution levels can be elevated a significant distance from the roadway.

For these reasons, the American Lung Association of the City of New York supports Transportation Alternatives in their effort to eliminate car traffic from the Central Park Loop Drive. Doing so will return the drive to its original purpose: a healthier, cleaner place where New Yorkers can exercise and enjoy the city.

CAR FREE CENTRAL PARK Give us a Car-Free Central Park!

American Lung Association
Audubon Society/New York City Chapter
Central Park Track Club
City Club of New York
Environmental Defense
Green Guerillas
Moving Comfort Running Club
Municipal Arts Society
Natural Resources Defense Council
NYC Environmental Justice Alliance
New York Cycle Club
New York Flyers Running Club
New York League of Conservation Voters
New York Public Interest Research Group
Regional Plan Association
Sierra Club/New York City Chapter
Straphangers Campaign
Tri-State Transportation Campaign
West Harlem Environmental Action

Three-month trial car-free period for Central Park!

Gifford Miller, Speaker, New York City Council*
Eva Moskowitz, City Councilmember
Gale Brewer, City Councilmember
Betsy Gotbaum, Public Advocate

*Strongly supports completely car-free park.

Metropolitan

News from the Metro NYC Region

Fall 2003

THE BRONX

State DOT Agrees to Assess Tearing Down Sheridan Expressway



THANKS TO YEARS OF TENACIOUS ADVOCACY BY THE TRI-STATE Transportation Campaign, New York City Environmental Justice Alliance and community allies, including Sustainable South Bronx and Youth Ministries for Peace and Justice, the State Department of Transportation is formally considering tearing down the Sheridan Expressway and replacing it with green space. The agency's "Community Plan" also calls for elevating the Bruckner Expressway over the Bronx River and creating new access between Bruckner and Leggett Avenues to move freight in and out of the Hunts Point Market area more efficiently.

But the teardown is no sure thing. The State DOT is considering 13 possible alternatives and will soon begin traffic modeling. The "Community Plan" and various State DOT plans for ramps that will extend into Hunts Point from a rebuilt highway interchange seem likely to be the main project options. Construction is planned for 2009. The State Department of Transportation will present 13 alternatives at a meeting tentatively scheduled for November. (See "Mobilizing the Region" #432 at tstc.org)

NASSAU COUNTY

Bus Crisis Part I: Long Island Bus in Crisis (Again)

LONG ISLAND BUS IS ONE OF THE NATION'S MOST SUCCESSFUL and efficient suburban mass transit operations. Its 417 buses carry 106,000 passengers a day, a 22% increase from 1996. And the company will probably be the first all-natural-gas fueled bus fleet on the East Coast. The fleet's increased ridership and performance upgrades are doubly impressive given the abusive budget cuts it has had to endure. The company's operations are paid for by fares, state transit aid and support from Nassau County. In 1999, the county contributed \$26 million. In 2003, the county cut its funding to \$8 million. In its plans for next year, the county has proposed cutting the company's support again by more than half, to \$3.5 million. In the last few years, the state legislature has bailed out bus riders with emergency grants, but this is not likely to continue. According to Jon Orcutt of the Tri-State



Transportation Campaign, the state needs to create a "downstate bus operating assistance fund" that is paid for by a small dedicated tax, similar to the other dedicated taxes supporting the MTA. Long Island Bus is not the only New York City area bus operation in serious financial trouble. Westchester's Bee Line also faces declining support from the county and Mayor Bloomberg no longer wants to pay \$100 million a year for operating support to private bus lines in Queens. Says Orcutt, "It is the bus systems, their riders, the environment and motorists stuck in worsening traffic who are going to pay the price if something more than a series of stop-gap solutions is not put in place."

QUEENS COUNTY

Bus Crisis Part II: NYC Funded Bus Fleets Sue DOT

MAYOR BLOOMBERG SAYS THAT THE CITY CAN NO LONGER PAY \$100 million a year to subsidize seven bus companies that serve 400,000 people a day, mainly in Queens. He is looking to the MTA to take over the City franchise bus fleet, which includes Green Line, Command Bus, Triboro Coach and Jamaica Buses. But the MTA says that it does not have the money. Caught in the middle are bus riders, who are already suffering from service reductions on routes in Queens and Brooklyn. The four companies filed a \$10 million federal lawsuit in September against the city Department of Transportation, arguing that antiquated funding formulas have "increasingly failed to meet the actual costs of providing the transportation services required by the City."

NEW JERSEY

NJ Transit Victim of Own Success?

NEW JERSEY TRANSIT (NJT) has introduced popular new services, made smart system connections and built new light rail lines.



In September, the agency opened the long awaited Secaucus Transfer, which connects ten of the system's 11 rail lines. The new connection has attracted more riders and led to demands for greater service. Because fares do not pay the full cost of transit service, this means that NJ Transit's operating costs are going up. Unfortunately, subsidies for the transit agency are not. The result is that NJT has had to take \$360 million from its capital budget for operating costs. The capital budget pays for new construction and reconstruction of existing rail lines and new trains and buses; taking from it will lead to higher costs in the future when NJT will need major overhauls to catch up with neglected infrastructure and vehicle maintenance. Depleting the capital budget could also lead to worsening system performance as outages and breakdowns increase.

Read "Mobilizing the Region," published weekly by the Tri-State Transportation Campaign: tstc.org

Lessons from Europe

What Germany and Holland Can Teach NYC About Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety

CRAZED CABBIES, AGGRESSIVE SPORTS UTILITY DRIVERS AND cell phoning motorists can make New York City streets feel dangerous. Unfortunately, this perception is accurate. Every year, motorists strike and injure an average of 15,000 pedestrians and 4,500 bicyclists in New York City.

New York City should look to what Germany and Holland have done to encourage bicycling and walking and reduce bicyclist and pedestrian deaths and injuries. Like New York City, these countries are heavily urban and are dependent on public transportation.

In the last few decades, Germany and Holland have made extraordinary progress to improve the safety of people walking and bicycling. From 1975 to 2001, cycling trips in Germany doubled, but bicycling deaths declined by 64% and pedestrian

fatalities by 82%. In Holland, pedestrian fatalities declined by 73% and cycling fatalities by 57%. (Note: New York City decreased the number of pedestrian fatalities by 40% between 1983 and 2002, from 305 to 184. Unfortunately, the City has not made similar progress in reducing

pedestrian injuries or cycling deaths and injuries.)

Germany and Holland have improved conditions for bicyclists and pedestrians by employing concerted, long-term public policies to reengineer streets, change urban design, strengthen traffic enforcement and traffic laws and institute more vigorous driver education. Almost all of what these countries have done could be replicated in some form in New York City, and would help to reduce significantly the number of New Yorkers struck, injured and killed by drivers. □

Better Facilities for Walking and Cycling

German and Dutch policy calls for extensive auto-free zones for pedestrians; wide, well-lit sidewalks; pedestrian refuge islands; clearly-marked zebra crosswalks; and pedestrian-activated crossing signals. Dutch and German cities have also invested heavily in expanding and improving bicycling facilities. Between 1978 and 1996, the Dutch more than doubled their already massive network of bike paths and lanes; the Germans tripled theirs from 1976 to 1995. Germany and Holland also provide an increasing number of "bicycle streets," where cyclists have strict right of way.

In New York City:

- Tame big, scary streets like Atlantic Avenue and Flatbush Avenue in Brooklyn and Queens Boulevard in Queens by installing and widening medians, extending sidewalks at corners ("neckdowns") and using raised intersections and crosswalks to slow turning vehicles and reduce speeds at intersections.
- Re-engineer bridge and tunnel

Based on "Promoting Safe Walking and Cycling to Improve Public Health: Lessons from The Netherlands and Germany" by John Pucher and Lewis Dykstra, September 2003. walkinginfo.org/pdf/AJPHArticle.pdf.



New York City has already traffic calmed Herald Square. The project's success should inspire the City to do more.

entrances, like the Brooklyn side of the Manhattan and Brooklyn Bridges, and mega-intersections like Grand Army Plaza in Brooklyn and Columbus Circle in Manhattan to put walkers and cyclists on equal footing with motorists.

- Connect bridges, greenways and bike lanes with safe bike lanes, including physically separated on-street lanes like the ones in Herald and Madison Squares in Manhattan.
- Widen the sidewalks on 7th and 8th Avenues near Penn Station and the Port Authority Bus Terminal in Manhattan and near other crowded transit hubs.
- Make Broadway between 42nd and 44th Streets in Midtown Manhattan and the areas near the stock exchange and Federal Reserve Bank in lower Manhattan into pedestrian space, and consider pedestrianizing Broadway between 34th and 42nd Streets.

Traffic Calming

Traffic calming limits the speeds of motor vehicle traffic through both law and physical barriers. Traffic calming techniques include raised intersections and crosswalks, traffic circles, road narrowing, zigzag routes, curves, speed humps and artificial dead-ends created by mid-block closures. In both The Netherlands and Germany, city officials use traffic calming to tame whole areas, not just isolated streets within that area. By approaching the problem from an area-wide perspective, German and Dutch officials ensure that faster through-traffic gets displaced onto arterial routes designed to handle it, and not simply shifted from one local road to another.

In New York City:

- Launch a Safe Routes to School program with public fanfare, and traffic calm the area around the 135 most pedestrian unfriendly schools.
- Regularly employ raised crosswalks, intersections and the full range of traffic calming engineering techniques to reduce through-traffic and slow traffic on secondary arterials like Hicks Street in Downtown Brooklyn.
- Traffic calm streets near museums, universities and other large institutions that are major pedestrian destinations.

Can Teach Urban Safety



Attractive bollards, like the ones on West 8th Street in Manhattan, foster safe and appealing walking areas.

People-Oriented Urban Design

New suburban developments in The Netherlands and Germany are designed to provide safe and convenient pedestrian and bicycling access. Residential developments almost always include other uses such as cultural centers, shopping and service establishments that can easily be reached by foot or bike. When non-motorists must traverse an obstacle such as a highway, railroad or river, Dutch and German cities usually provide them with safe and attractive pedestrian and bicyclist crossings.

In New York City:

- Convert some on-street parking spots in crowded areas into space for newsstands and vendors.
- Change building regulations to limit curb cuts, thus reducing the number of vehicles crossing sidewalks. Ensure that gas stations, parking lots and drive-through restaurants are safe and easy for pedestrians to walk around.
- Ensure that big box stores are designed for congenial pedestrian access and are not islands in a vast sea of parking. Do not allow auto-dependent malls or big box stores unless they provide free delivery.
- Scale down development plans for Hudson River Park and Brooklyn Bridge Park.
- Continue to limit parking at new residential and commercial developments.
- Keep motorists from parking and driving on sidewalks by using sturdy bollards.

- Consider building light rail on heavily used bus corridors like Queens Boulevard in Queens, and First and Second Avenues and 42nd Street in Manhattan.

Restrictions on Motor Vehicle Use

Dutch and German cities also restrict auto use by charging much more for parking than American cities. In addition, most Dutch and German cities prohibit truck traffic and through-traffic of any kind in residential neighborhoods.

In New York City:

- Make Central and Prospect Parks car-free.
- Charge more for on-street parking to reduce the double parking threat to cyclists and properly reflect the value of this desirable public property. Expand the DOT's Midtown Commercial Vehicle Congestion Parking Program to include all arterial streets throughout the city.
- Toll the East River bridges to pay for the cost of bridge upkeep and fund new public transportation.
- End free on-street parking for municipal employees. Begin by banning city employees from parking in metered spaces



The City closed the Columbus Circle entrance to Central Park and reclaimed it as park space. Next step: a car-free park.

Traffic Education

Driver training for motorists in The Netherlands and Germany is much more extensive, thorough and expensive than in the United States. In their training programs, the Dutch and Germans emphasize how crucial it is to pay special attention to avoiding collisions with pedestrians and cyclists. Motorists are required by law to drive in a way that minimizes the risk of injury for pedestrians and cyclists even if they are jaywalking, cycling in the wrong direction, ignoring traffic signals or otherwise violating traffic regulations.

In New York City:

- Pass New York State legislation funding the adoption of AAA Traffic Safety Foundation's "Novice Driver, Model Curriculum."
- Launch "Kill Your Speed, Not a Child" media campaign.

- Hire an expert consult to audit the existing curriculum of driver education classes in New York City and its suburbs.



Traffic Regulations and Enforcement

Traffic regulations in Germany and The Netherlands strongly favor pedestrians and bicyclists. The most significant difference between the transportation policy of these countries and that of the United States is how much more strictly they enforce traffic regulations for motorists. German and Dutch penalties can be high, even for minor violations. They consider not stopping for pedestrians at crosswalks a serious offense and will ticket a motorist for non-compliance, even if pedestrians are only waiting at the curb and are not actually in the crosswalk.

In New York City:

- Pass state legislation allowing New York City to deploy 200 red light cameras. (Start with legislation allowing 100.)
- Pass state legislation allowing New York City to deploy 100 speed cameras. (Start with allowing the city to use six car-mounted speed cameras like Washington D.C.)
- Increase enforcement of illegal oversize trucks and trucks driving outside of designated routes.
- Pass state legislation making it a felony for a motorist with a suspended or revoked drivers license to be involved as a driver in a crash in which someone is injured or killed.
- Raise the fine for speeding, red light running and reckless driving on New York City streets to \$250 per violation and allow police to confiscate vehicles driven on sidewalks.
- Pass state legislation reducing the requirement to prove intent in crashes involving injury and death to one illegal action instead of two. (End the rule of two.)

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Auto-Free WORLD

Polluted Paris Mulls Congestion Charge

FRANCE IS CONSIDERING A LONDON-STYLE vehicle congestion charge for Paris in an effort to reduce choking pollution, which has pushed the capital close to emergency traffic restrictions, a government minister said. "All aspects of the London experience are worth studying," said a Paris official, who also said that a 2.5 cent per liter rise in taxes on diesel next year was an environmental measure. Police have imposed speed restrictions because of pollution levels. The authorities could order every other car off the road at the weekend in an attempt to limit pollution levels.

Reuters

Toyota Tells Employees Not to Drive to Work

TO ALLEVIATE THE TRAFFIC JAM THAT occurs each day at the company's headquarters in Toyota City, Japan, the company is asking the people who work to develop cars to avoid commuting in them. "It may seem like a contradiction, but if you think about the problems we are causing to the community around us, it can't be helped," said Toyota spokeswoman Monika Fujita. "It's also quite meaningless to drive in a traffic jam," she said.

Japan Today

School District Bans Bikes

THE WAUCONDA SCHOOL DISTRICT in Chicago has decided to ban students at Wauconda Grade School from cycling to school. The school District Superintendent explained that parents drive so many children to school that it has become unsafe for cyclists and walkers. Rather than controlling traffic around the school, the Superintendent said "the simplest answer is for the school to ban bike riding." And now, with the bike ban, there will be even more traffic.

Chicagoland Bicycle Federation

Americans Wasting Their Lives Waiting in Traffic



THE AVERAGE RUSH-HOUR DRIVER wasted more than two full days—about 51 hours—sitting in traffic in 2001, according to an annual report released recently by the Texas Transportation Institute at Texas A&M University. That is an increase of four hours in the last five years. The price tag: \$69.5 billion in wasted time and gas, said the study, which looked at 75 urban areas. The report found that the average rush-hour driver in Los Angeles spent about 90 hours waiting in traffic in 2001, far more than anywhere else. The San Francisco-Oakland area was next at 68 hours, followed by Denver (64), Miami (63) and Chicago and Phoenix, which tied for fifth (61).

Associated Press

Driving Carnage Too Much for the Mighty Vulcan

ONE OF THE COUNTRY'S STRANGEST traffic safety symbols has returned to his perch but without his old sense of duty. Vulcan, a 56-foot tall, 200,000 pound sculpture atop Red Mountain in Birmingham, Alabama, once held a torch in his outstretched arm that glowed red to indicate an area traffic fatality within 24 hours or green giving the all clear. After a nearly four-year, \$14 million restoration and reconstruction, the world's largest cast iron sculpture is back, but with an unlit spear in his right hand. "I've felt it gives Vulcan a negative connotation," said Scott



Howell, president of restoration contractor. "In 1946, traffic deaths were less common than they are today. It seems like it would be red nearly all the time."

Transportation Alternatives

European Cities Have Annual Car-Free Day

MORE THAN 1,000 CITIES, MOST OF THEM in Europe, took part in the sixth annual car-free day. The annual event started six years ago in France as a way to push drivers to think about air pollution and their role in creating it. This time, the problem seemed even more pressing: Bad air worsened the suffering of thousands of elderly people who died in August's soaring temperatures. But people had a hard time leaving their cars in the garage, and many streets were as clogged as usual.

Associated Press

Toddler Crashes Dad's Car Twice in Four Days



A MOTOR-MAD THREE-YEAR-OLD GERMAN boy crashed his father's car twice in four days, police in the town in the UK said on Monday. Using a ladder, the boy stole the keys to his father's Honda Accord, started the car and plowed it into a nearby Toyota, causing some \$5,750 of damage but escaping unharmed. When a television crew came to their home to reconstruct the incident four days later, the young lad took matters into his own hands. Sitting behind the wheel with the car key given to him during filming, his urge to drive overtook him again. "The father was with the television crew," said Borken police spokesman Frank Rentmeister. "The car was in gear and the boy just started up and drove into the car ahead." The boy was not hurt, but chalked up further damages totaling around \$859.

Reuters

Bike to Transit

Going somewhere? Bring your bike. Use our listings of bicycle policies of area trains, buses and ferries. Detailed information of our full list is online at transalt.org/info/aboard.html.

TRAINS

Amtrak 800-872-7245, AMTRAK.COM. No permit. Bicycles travel only in baggage cars. You may put your bike on an earlier train and pick it up when you arrive (no tandems). Bicycles usually must be boxed. \$5 fee each way. Roll-on service at most stops on "Adirondack" trains. Call for reservations.

Long Island Railroad 718-558-8228, MTA.INFO. Need permit; pick up from Penn or Grand Central Stations. \$5 one-time fee. Limit two bikes per car, four bikes per train. Wkdy OB: departing Penn Station 9 am-3 pm and 8 pm-7 am. Wkdy IB: arriving 10 am-4 pm and 7 pm-6 am. Wkends and Holidays: see permit.

Metro North 212-532-4900, MTA.INFO. Need permit; pick up from Grand Central, window #27. \$5 one-time fee. Limit two bikes per car, four bikes per train. Port Jarvis line—get NJ Transit pass. Wkdy OB: departing Grand Central 9 am-3 pm and 8:15 pm-6 am. Wkdy IB: arriving 10 am-4 pm and 7 pm-6 am. Wkend: no restrictions. Holidays: See permit.

New Jersey Transit 973-762-5100, NJTRANSIT.COM. No permit. Wkdy OB: departing Penn Station 9:30 am-4 pm and 7 pm-5 am. Wkdy IB: arriv-

ing 9:30 am-4 pm and 7 pm-5 am. Wkend: no restrictions. Holidays: see permit.

NY Transit (subway). MTA.INFO. No permit. Be considerate and use ends of train cars. A few stations' gates limit bike entry/exit at times.

PATH 800-234-PATH/201-216-6247, PANYNJ.GOV. No permit. Wkdy OB/IB: 9:30 am-3:30 pm and 6:30 pm-6:30 am.

BUSES

Greyhound 800-231-2222, GREYHOUND.COM. \$15/bike. Provide your own box or \$10.

MTA 718-445-3100, MTA.NYC.NY.GOV. Seasonal on QBx1 over Whitestone Bridge.

NJ Transit 800-777-3606/973-491-9400, NJTRANSIT.COM. No fee. Luggage bays on northern Jersey division.

Peter Pan 800-343-9999, PETERPANBUS.COM. No fee. Travels in luggage bay. Box required.

FERRIES

NY Waterway 800-53-FERRY, NYWATERWAY.COM. \$1/bike.

Staten Island Ferry 718-815-BOAT, SIFERRY.COM. No fee. Enter at lower level.

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The Marzulli Family

Names: Penny, 44; Jack, 13; Pete, 11

Commute: We commute to school from Chelsea to the Upper West Side. We ride together from 19th Street between 8th & 9th Avenues to the Hudson River Greenway. From there, we take the bike path to West 72nd Street, through Riverside Park to West 78th Street and up West 78th Street to Westend Avenue. Three miles. 20-25 minutes.

Bike: Jack rides a Giant hybrid and Pete rides a Trek mountain bike.

Gear: Helmets, rubber bands, backpacks

How long commuting: One month

Why started? We could not bear to end the summer and get back on the subways; it is great to keep in shape and get some fresh air early in the day!

Attire: School clothes, gloves, jackets

Weather: We ride as long as it's not raining hard or too cold or windy!



What is Success? This is Success.

The Marzulli's decision to begin bike commuting using the Hudson River Greenway illustrates the powerful effect that car-free paths have on encouraging everyday bicycling. When the city's two most vulnerable populations, children and the elderly, feel comfortable bicycling and walking more, it is a clear indication that the City has done something right. While cycling is almost non-existent among the American elderly, it accounts for a fourth of all trips made by the Dutch elderly and for 7% of trips by the German elderly. See pages 18 and 19 for a list of easy things that New York City can do to help more families become regular bike commuters.

Response from friends and schoolmates: "Cool bikes"; "you're so lucky you can ride to school." Many of our friends have told their parents and asked if they could ride a bike to school.

Advice: DO IT!

Lock: Cable lock

Parking: Bike rack in school courtyard

Best commute: Sunny, on a bike

Worst experience/commute: A very windy day when it felt like we'd never get home.

Memorable experiences: Pete tumbling off his bike, onto the grass, unable to stop his momentum because of a VERY heavy backpack of books!

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Volunteer Profile

Sung Bin Park

Occupation: Bookstore Manager

Age: 27

T.A. Member Since: 2003

Neighborhood: Greenpoint, Brooklyn

What volunteer activities have you done for T.A.? I've helped out with mailings, telephone surveys, loading trucks, phone banking, Hazard ID and most recently, I marshaled the 15-mile route of T.A.'s NYC Century Bike Tour.

Why do you help T.A. out? I've seen first hand just how hard T.A. works to promote safer environments for pedestrians and cyclists and it makes my day to be a part of their team in some way.

How did you first find out about Transportation Alternatives? I picked up a copy of *City Cyclist* in my local bike shop and checked out T.A.'s Web site. I saw an ad for a volunteer mailing party and decided to go. I had never heard about T.A. before that point.

How many hours do you spend volunteering each month? I'm not sure, but I wish that it were more! In the begin-

ning, I volunteered about once a week. Now, it's more like once a month or whenever an opportunity comes up.

What is your philosophy on volunteering?

I enjoy being able to support something that will help others promote change for the better.

I understand that you were a super volunteer for T.A.'s recent bike tour. Tell me more!

I don't think I'll ever forget the route; I've been over it so many times! I marshaled the 15-mile ride and helped with miscellaneous preliminaries, like Hazard ID along the route from Central Park to Prospect Park and calling all the volunteers the day before the ride to remind them to show up.

What was your favorite part of the ride? Getting to see all these people riding with you and having a good

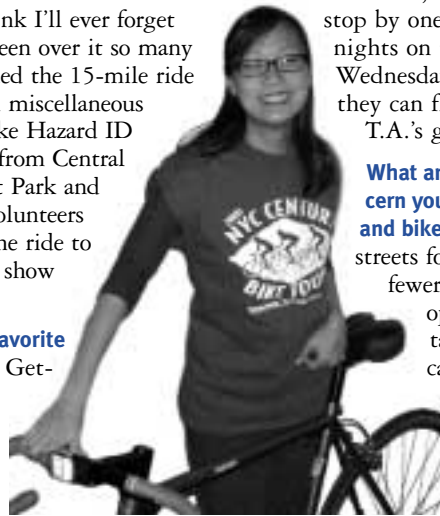
time. I especially enjoyed seeing families riding together.

What do you hope to work on for next year's ride? I would love to marshal again and also get more involved in even more aspects of the planning process.

If you wanted other people to volunteer, what would you tell them about T.A.?

That T.A. is the best organization to volunteer for. The staff and environment really make it easy for you to work. And, of course, people should stop by one of their volunteer nights on the second and last Wednesdays of the month so that they can find out more about T.A.'s good work.

What are some issues that concern you as someone who walks and bikes in NYC? We need safer streets for walking and riding and fewer cars on the road. Developers have allowed cars to take over too much physical space in the city. It is such a battle to travel long distances on my bike; cars are always speeding and clogging up the streets.



ANNIE HART

Make a Difference – Volunteer!

Brooklyn Committee

Work on Car-Free Prospect Park, Downtown Brooklyn Traffic Calming, Brooklyn and Manhattan Bridge access a pedestrian safe Grand Army Plaza and other issues. Sign-up for the Brooklyn e-mail list: Transalt.org/Brooklyn. Bklyn@transalt.org, 212-629-8080. Meets the last Monday of every month at Ozzie's, 249 5th Avenue, between Carroll Street and Garfield Street in Park Slope, Brooklyn.

Bronx Committee

Help us re-open the Highbridge Bridge, reinstate car-free Sundays on the Grand Concourse, win a new segment of the Hudson River Greenway in Riverdale Park and make other projects. Bronx@transalt.org, 718-653-2203

Greenpoint/Northside Brooklyn Working Group

T.A.'s newest committee is already hard

at work getting the metal bumps removed from the Williamsburg path, bicycle parking at the Bedford Avenue L stop and stopping illegal truck traffic around Cooper Park. Volunteer@transalt.org, 212-629-8080.

Car-Free Central Park Committee

We cannot stand cars in the park either, and we are doing something about it! Get in the loop and help get cars off it, join our e-mail list: Car-freecentralpark.org. CentralPark@transalt.org, 212-629-8080.

Gowanus Taskforce

If you live near the Gowanus Expressway you should be part of determining its future. The highway will soon be rebuilt and the chance to make a difference is now. T.A. is a core member of the Gowanus Community Stakeholder

Group, which seeks to ensure an unbiased study of whether to replace the hulking highway with a new elevated or a tunnel. Your help on this megaproject will make a difference for decades to come. Gowanus@transalt.org, 212-629-8080.

Be a T.A. Greenway Steward

Help T.A. make the greenway a safer, more pleasant place to bike, walk, jog, stake and stroll. Report on and document greenway conditions, take photos, attend community meetings and teach greenway users about safety on the path.



Little Progress at Grand Army Plaza

I READ YOUR ARTICLE IN THE *DAILY NEWS* from July 7, 2003 regarding the Grand Army Plaza crossing from the park to the library. I use that cross walk every day and was hopeful when we saw that work started. Unfortunately all the good work that went into it did little good. The island where one has to wait for the light to change in the middle of six lanes does not provide any more protection than the old one did. The cross walk and the ramps still do not line up and the sequencing of the light is such that one is stuck in the middle of the six lanes crowded on a very small section of concrete while cars whiz by behind and in front. So far this has not been an improvement just an additional inconvenience during the fruitless construction. Is there hope for improvement? Unfortunately it is all poured in concrete and I am it sure cost a lot of money.

-HEINRICH SPILLMANN

Queens Greenways Inaccessible!

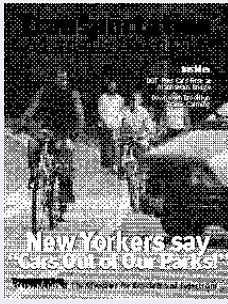
ARE THERE ANY PLANS TO CONNECT THE Queens Greenways? As a Queens resident near Forest Park, I have no real safe means of getting to the other Greenways with my children unless I buy a bike rack and drive to them.

-BETTY IN FOREST HILLS, NY

T.A. Response: The Department of City Planning is developing plans for the Queens East River Greenway, which

I'm the pesky T.A. member who complained about all the boxes on the northeast corner of 96 and Broadway. Here's the progress report: almost nil.

would run between Hunters Point and the Flushing Bay Promenade, and the Brooklyn-Queens Greenway, which would run from Coney Island to Little Neck Bay. However, these are just plans, and it is up to the Parks Department to build the projects. We recommend writing to Parks Commissioner Benepe, encouraging the Parks Department to build more car-free greenways. Commissioner Adriane Benepe, NYC Department of Parks and Recreation, The Arsenal, Central Park, 830 5th Avenue, New York, NY 10021.



The Word on the Streets

Thank you to the many readers who send letters in response to *Transportation Alternatives Magazine*, the T.A. E-Bulletin or transalt.org. Feedback from readers is hugely helpful.

We encourage all readers to send us comments. E-mail info@transalt.org; mail to 115 W. 30th Street, Suite 1207, New York, NY 10001; fax 212-629-8334; or submit a comment through our Web site. We look forward to hearing from you!

Vendor Boxes Still Block Sidewalks

HI. I'M THE PESKY T.A. MEMBER WHO complained about all the boxes on the northeast corner of 96 and Broadway. Here's the progress report: almost nil. Of the 17 boxes formerly there, there are now about 14. So about three were removed. Yikes. I noticed that the DOT put papers on each indicating action to be taken, including removal of the boxes. What has happened? Someone has removed the papers. Talk about an ineffective technique.

-MAXINE SPECTOR

DOT Response: When we looked on September 9th, there were eight news racks on that corner. It is possible that more have been placed there in the interim. Also, just to clarify the process: the DOT does not have the right to remove news racks until after adjudication by the Environmental

Control Board. The "papers" you have seen on these news racks mean that we have issued notices of correction and the cases are on their way to Environmental Control Board; but the process takes time.

T.A. Response: Unfortunately, it is true that the Department of Transportation is constrained by a law that requires the agency to follow a tortured procedure to remove each illegal box. See the nyc.gov/dot for the full description of the process.

Hey Brooklyn Drivers: Slow Your Roll!

I WAS WONDERING HOW TO FILE A PETITION for having speed humps installed on East 5th Street between Avenues M and N in Brooklyn. There are so many children in this neighborhood and the speeds in which cars travel are ridiculously high. Even when drivers are backing up to retrieve a spot, they zoom backwards down the street with excessive speeds. Many of our neighbors have expressed an interest in these speed bumps and elected me to find out the procedure for obtaining them. I would appreciate your prompt reply as we have been lucky thus far and no one has gotten hurt.

-DONNA KARIM

T.A. Response: The best way to get speed humps is to get your community board and city councilmember to request them separately. To get your community board to request, present it with a petition from a big list of neighbors. Call the community board office and explain what you want. It might not say that you need the petition, but we think it is worth doing anyway since it shows a high level of support for speed humps.

Corrections

The photo captions on page nine were switched. The picture on the upper right is Yeshiva and lower left is 59th Street and 5th Avenue.

The article on "The Hours" toll report by Komanoff and Ketcham states that, "only 2% of Brooklyn and Queens residents would pay more than \$50 a year in tolls." It should say that the study found that the 98% who do not commute on a free bridge would average only \$50/year. □

NYC Century Bike Tour

Let There be



JOYCE KILEY

The 14th Annual NYC Century Bike Tour Attracts 4,400 Riders

T.A.'S 14TH ANNUAL NYC CENTURY BIKE TOUR BROUGHT together 4,500 riders from New York City and far beyond for a beautiful, fun day of exploring Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens and The Bronx from the best vantage point—their bicycles. This was T.A.'s largest and most successful NYC Century Bike Tour yet, attracting a

record number of riders and new members. We were particularly excited to offer a new 15-mile route through Manhattan and Queens for families and new riders.

T.A. stages the NYC Century Bike Tour to raise money to support our advocacy work to promote bicycling, walking and sensible transportation, encourage daily cycling in New York City and attract new members. And it works. We raise one fourth of our yearly budget and bring in a flood of new members while having the pleasure of sharing our vision of a truly bicycle-friendly city.

The tour is also a great vehicle for furthering our advocacy goals of improving the bicycling and pedestrian



JOYCE KILEY
Many kids participated in their first bike tour.

infrastructure. We work with the Parks Department, the Department of Transportation, the Department of Sanitation, the Triboro Bridge Authority, the Police Department and other city agencies to fix street, greenway and bridge path hazards.

We want to extend a special thank you to the thousands of riders who filled out our post-ride survey, giving us feedback on how we can make the ride even better.

We have listened carefully and are now already in the process of making improvements to all of the routes for next year to feature new parts of the burgeoning bike system.

See you next year at the NYC Century Bike Tour 2004!

Thank You Volunteers!

Thank You NYC!

Early morning assistance: David Woloch, Deputy Commissioner for External Affairs/Senior Policy Advisor at the Department of Transportation; Deputy Inspector Cassidy from the NYPD Traffic Control Division.

Route assistance: the City of New York Parks Department, NYC Department of Transportation, New York Police Department, Triboro Bridge Authority, the NYC Department of Sanitation and Evan Korn.

Rest stop hosts: the NYC Department of Parks and Recreation, Gateway National Recreation Area, Central Park Conservancy, Prospect Park Alliance and Friends of Van Cortlandt Park.

Sponsors: Robert Fader, Esq.; Bicycle Habitat and Adam White, Esq.

Food donors: Accelerade, Naked Juice, Clif Bar, Kontos, Tom Cat Bakery, Nutella, Terra Chips, Chiquita Banana, Tribe of Two Sheiks Hummus/Rite Foods and Smuckers.

Supply and service donors: Martin Grillo and Emergency Medical Rescue of NYC, Bayside VAC, Glendale VAC, Park Slope VAC, Queens Village VAC, Throgs Neck VAC, Sherwin-Williams/Krylon, Seth Asher Massage, Recycle-A-Bicycle, Hotel Edison and the Ameritania.

Bikes!



BETTE ANNI LIBBY

According to the post-ride survey, many riders think that crossing the Brooklyn Bridge is the best part of the ride.



BETTE ANNI LIBBY

Riding down Fifth Avenue also ranked high on the list of riders' favorite parts of the tour.



JOYCE KILEY

Cruising on the Ward's Island foot-bridge on the way to the finish line.

NYC Century Bike Tour 2003 Fun Facts

- 307,330** Number of miles bicycled by participants
- 13** Number of greenways on route
- 10** Number of on street bike lanes on route
- 9** Number of bridges on route
- 19** Number of parks on route
- 6,480-7,296** Number of calories burned riding the 100-mile route
- 5,184-5,837** Number of calories burned riding the 75-mile route
- 2,673-3,010** Number of calories burned riding the 55-mile route
- 972-1,094** Number of calories burned riding the 35-mile route
- 816-953** Number of calories burned riding the 15-mile route
- 194** Number of calories of peanut butter consumed per rider
- 40,000** Number of ounces of Naked Juice
- 200** Number of pounds of hummus
- 45,000** Number of orange slices
- John and Michael** Most popular first name
- Canada, Colombia, Germany** Foreign countries represented
- Seemingly infinite** Number of bees "volunteering" at the rest stops



KEN COUGHLIN

Thanks to the many volunteers who made the event possible, including these awesome volunteers at the hoppin' Astoria Park rest stop.



KARLA QUINTERO

Our youngest volunteers offered fruit and chips to hungry riders in Van Cortlandt Park.

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