

# The DOT Needs a Doctor



BLUE RIBBON BAKERY

One of the ghost bike shrines and markers that have been installed at locations where four NYC cyclists were killed this summer by a group called Visual Resistance. **Page 6**

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## Transportation ALTERNATIVES

**MISSION STATEMENT:** Encourage bicycling, walking and public transit as alternatives to automobile use, and reduce automobile use and its attendant environmental and social harms.

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IN THE WAKE OF THE RECENT RASH of bicyclist deaths, T.A., on behalf of a growing coalition of bicycle groups from around New York City (see page 6), met with Iris Weinshall, the Commissioner of the City Department of Transportation. Commissioner Weinshall told us that her agency would do more to expand the City's bikeway network were it not for the objections raised by some local residents. It is true, some efforts to put more and wider bicycle lanes on city streets have been opposed by local community boards on grounds ranging from the loss of their parking and driving space to the fear that their streets will be invaded by spandex-clad exhibitionists.

the expertise and authority to bring compelling new data to community groups about why bikeways are important for cyclists and non-cyclists alike. DOH could provide the DOT some political cover as they take action make streets less deadly and more conducive to active, healthy transportation.

Sadly, this Commissioner has proven herself unresponsive to our suggestions. Soon, however, this will change. For one, we will continue to fight. The time is right for this struggle as the body of research that links pedestrian and bicyclist unfriendly streets to asthma, obesity, and traffic injuries and fatalities is mounting too quickly to be ignored, even by complacent City agencies. And for



But why should the Department of Transportation defer to Community Boards in regards to this, but not countless other, vital transportation issues? After all, bikeways are not mere recreational assets. They are a crucial element of a safe and active transportation system for New York City. We need more and better designed transportation infrastructure to accommodate the increasing number of New Yorkers who are choosing to get around the city by bicycle, and to but an end to the tragic and utterly preventable killing of cyclists.

For over one year now, Transportation Alternatives, often in cooperation with groups like the American Heart Association, has fought to bring the Department of Health and the Department of Transportation together to embark on a comprehensive effort to prevent the impact traumas, lung diseases and obesity related ills that are bred by New York City's car oriented and unsafe streets. The City Department of Health has

**Four cyclists were senselessly killed on New York City streets this summer. When will DOT start making streets safe for the most vulnerable users?**

every additional city that teams their health and transportation departments to conduct successful anti speeding campaigns, preventive analyses of traffic fatalities and injuries and whole scale street redesigns, New York

City looks ever more flat footed.

Due to bureaucratic torpor, it took decades before City engineers finally listened to public health advocates and began collaborating with them on a plan to update the design of the sewer system to rid New York City of cholera. For the sake of our city's most efficient, noble and vulnerable street users and those who love them, let us hope it does not take that long to rid our city of traffic trauma.

Paul Steely White  
Executive Director  
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