

# Transportation ALTERNATIVES

115 West 30<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 1207 □ New York, NY 10001  
212-629-8080 □ Fax 212-629-8334 • [www.transalt.org](http://www.transalt.org)

## Recommendations for the Downtown Brooklyn Transportation Blueprint

### **I. Scope, Purpose, and Commitment**

The Blueprint should serve the people who live, work, shop, play and go to school in and around Downtown Brooklyn. Accordingly, the project should focus primarily on those policies and plans that will preserve and enhance the quality of these activities.

The project must include a firm commitment to implement the measures developed in the Blueprint and a plan to find funding for each one.

It is good that the DOT aims to include the local community and experts in developing the Blueprint. Since the DOT is asking the community and experts to contribute significant time and staff resources to this task (as was the case with the Downtown Brooklyn Traffic Calming Project) we think it is essential for the DOT to commit, in writing, to adopt and implement the Blueprint and develop a funding plan for it.

As increases in traffic and land use will yield increased potential for conflicts between street users, it is imperative that the Blueprint include goals and strategies to reduce crashes, particularly driver-pedestrian and driver-bicyclist crashes. In addition to saving lives and injuries, a safer street environment will be an inducement towards alternative modes of travel.

### **II. Policy Framework**

Without question, the planned zoning changes and new development in Downtown Brooklyn will lead to an increasing number of trips.

An effective policy framework will provide a solid foundation to ensure, a) that through traffic in Downtown Brooklyn declines, and b) that proposed development in Downtown Brooklyn does not lead to unacceptable increases in vehicular traffic to and within Downtown Brooklyn. Put another way, the policy should mandate measures that increase the share of transit, walking and biking trips to Downtown Brooklyn. The Downtown Brooklyn Coalition has already articulated these goals as part of its Community Statement of Needs created in Spring 2004 in response to the Downtown upzoning plans.

Pursuant to this general goal of reducing vehicular traffic, the policy framework should include the following:

1. Clearly worded priorities that establish the primacy of preferred modes (transit, walking and bicycling) of personal travel to and within Downtown Brooklyn and surrounding neighborhoods.

2. Specific goals to:

- Reduce through-traffic in Downtown Brooklyn, i.e. motorists who use Downtown Brooklyn as a cut through route (mainly between the BQE and Brooklyn and Manhattan Bridges).
- Increase the share of trips undertaken by preferred modes to and within the study area and decrease the share of trips undertaken by non preferred modes.
- Decrease motorist-pedestrian and motorist-bicyclist crashes using traffic engineering changes that give pedestrians and bicyclists more protected space and time to navigate streets and cross intersections and using campaigns to encourage people traveling to and within Downtown Brooklyn to take transit, walk and bicycle.

3. Firm targets. For example:

- 40% reduction in through traffic
- 20% reduction in the share of “non preferred” trips to and within Downtown Brooklyn by the year 2025 over current levels
- 50% reduction in pedestrian and bicyclist crashes by the year 2025 over current levels.

4. A coherent strategy to achieve these targets. The strategy should clearly list the pedestrian safety, traffic calming, pricing and TDM measures that will be deployed by the DOT to achieve the targets. (see III below) The strategy should also include the acting agency and funding options to carry out the specific measures.

5. Benchmarks for tracking success over time so that if benchmarks are not met, strategies can be modified accordingly.

### **III. Strategies**

Specific strategies to achieve the targets should be included in the Blueprint. These measures include but may not be limited to:

#### **Tolls:**

- East River bridge tolls, particularly truck tolls. May include traffic modeling to show effects in study area of East River tolls.
- Support federal legislation reinstating two-way tolls on the Verrazano Bridge, or alternatively institute a tolling policy that permits congestion pricing by vehicle type to discourage influx of large trucks through downtown Brooklyn.
- Truck management plan. Consider allowing only smaller trucks to carry goods. This could require some kind of transfer area, where large trucks transfer goods to smaller trucks for delivery. It could also dictate preferred delivery hours.

### **Reducing Crashes:**

- 20 mph zones (accomplished through traffic calming) at all area schools and senior centers.
- Leading Pedestrian Intervals or split phasing at all intersections.
- Signal timing changed to balance walking pace rather than just driving speed.
- Base pedestrian crossing speed changed from 4 feet per second to three feet per second or less.
- Pedestrian refuge islands on large arterials such as Atlantic Avenue and Flatbush Avenue.
- Pedestrian streets, street closures (total or partial during weekends and daytime hours).
- No car parking at corners (daylighting) and subsequent curb extensions.
- Median extensions into intersections where there is no turning movement.

### **Increasing the Share of Preferred Modes of Travel:**

- Bicycle racks at all subway and major bus stations.
- Secure bike parking at Atlantic Terminal LIRR, Court St. Borough Hall and Jay Street Borough Hall/Metrotech station.
- Bicycle parking on all commercial streets.
- Extension of the successful muni-meter program to all commercial streets.
- Liberal use of the Parks Department's street trees program on commercial streets.
- Create a comprehensive parking management plan that includes residential parking permits, parking prices that promote transit use (similar to midtown prices) and reduced parking supply in Downtown Brooklyn as well as Cobble Hill, Boerum Hill, Fort Greene, Fulton Ferry and Dumbo. This includes extending the "no authorized permit" zone to the limits of the Primary Study Area of the Downtown Brooklyn Traffic Calming Project plus DUMBO and Vinegar Hill. Minimizing vehicular parking requirements for new buildings (including commercial). (DCP)
- Installation of bus shelters where they do not currently exist. (MTA)
- Pedestrian level of service analysis showing existing and projected. (DCP is already working on a model)
- Feasibility study of Bus Rapid Transit lanes extended from downtown along main corridors, such as Fulton Street into Bed Stuy, Atlantic Ave to Bed Stuy and Flatbush Ave to Prospect Lefferts Gardens as well as along Livingston Avenue.
- A study of the effects and implications of creating a transportation improvement district, in which businesses coming into the area contribute something to transit improvements, perhaps station upgrades or bus rapid transit infrastructure. This could work like a business improvement district or be part of a larger BID program.
- Establish a new NYPD Unit (similar to Midtown Manhattan Traffic Control's Division) to address traffic and parking violations and truck route violations, and carry out enforcement in downtown Brooklyn and the surrounding neighborhoods.
- Discourage the creation of new parking garage spaces to discourage induced traffic.