

THE OFFICE OF ROAD SAFETY

Bill Number: Intro. 0047-2010 (Lappin)

WHAT IS THE OFFICE OF ROAD SAFETY?

The Office of Road Safety is a multi-agency effort to reduce danger to pedestrians in New York City. The initiative will support a dedicated, robust and effective collaboration between representatives from the NYPD, Department of Transportation, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and the District Attorney offices. The office will coordinate new efforts to deter dangerous driving, craft enforcement priorities, strengthen prosecution, urge driver education, support safe street design and collect epidemiological research efforts in order to reduce the number of vehicle crashes that kill and injure New Yorkers and cost the city tens of millions of dollars each year.

WHY NEW YORKERS NEED AN OFFICE OF ROAD SAFETY

Crashes, injuries and fatalities on New York City streets are preventable. Despite recent positive trends, more than 250 New Yorkers were killed on New York City's roads in 2009. Injuries to pedestrians exceed 10,000 annually. **Being hit by a car remains the number one cause of injury-related deaths in children 1-14 years of age and the second leading cause of these deaths in those over the age of 45.** It is truly a public health epidemic that impacts the most vulnerable users of our roadways.

The complex nature of this issue, which straddles road design, vehicular law enforcement, prosecution and medical professionals, precludes the possibility of any one City agency effectively ameliorating the problem on its own. Only with collaboration—looking across all relevant City agencies—can this multifaceted problem be fully addressed.

The Office of Road Safety will accomplish this objective by formally creating a central point in government responsible for reducing the incidence of traffic violations, crashes, injuries and fatalities through effective inter-agency collaboration and innovative problem solving. By implementing a structure in which experts from individual and independent agencies can formally support one another, the City will be in the best possible position to dramatically reduce rates of pedestrian injuries and deaths.

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL FINANCIAL COSTS

In addition to saving lives and averting injuries, the coordinated actions of this office will also reduce the financial costs associated with automobile crashes, saving the city millions of dollars each year. As calculated by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration in 2000, each serious injury costs \$314,204 and each fatality costs \$3,366,388. **Using the most conservative estimates, traffic injuries and fatalities cost the City tens of millions of dollars each year.**

EXAMPLES OF INTER-AGENCY PRECEDENT

The successful Mayor's Office of Special Enforcement (OSE) is responsible for coordinating enforcement efforts across multiple City agencies to address a wide range of quality of life issues. According to its official mandate, "OSE ensures that these enforcement efforts are leveraged across all five boroughs to address dangerous conditions...that require a coordinated, multi-agency response," and is located within the Office of the Criminal Justice Coordinator and reports to Deputy Mayor Edward Skyler.

Additional examples of successful inter-agency efforts include the Mayor's Office of Long-term Planning and Sustainability and the Mayor's Interagency Task Force on Child Welfare and Safety. The 2006 *Bicyclist Fatalities and Serious Injuries in New York City* report successfully fostered inter-agency coordination on road-safety issues, bringing together police, health, transportation and parks departments. The result is that New York City is now the leading innovator in cycling encouragement and safety in the U.S.

TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES

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CONSIDER THE FACTS

Without formal and longstanding coordination by City agencies, traffic injuries and fatalities will remain a persistent risk to the safety of New Yorkers.

- In 2008, 81% of fatal traffic crashes were caused by traffic violations **which could be enforced against** such as speeding, running red lights and failure to yield.¹
- Between 2001 and 2008, 2,582 people were killed in traffic crashes in New York City. **Almost 50% of those killed were pedestrians.**²
- Nearly **40% of drivers speed** on New York City streets and speeding is responsible for roughly 3,000 crashes every year.³
- Each automobile crash resulting in **serious injury leads to \$314,204 in medical, insurance, legal, property and associated costs.**⁴
- The City paid out **\$59 million in 2008** to settle personal injury and property damage claims stemming from motor vehicle accidents involving government vehicles.⁵

1 New York State Department of Motor Vehicles

2 New York State Department of Motor Vehicles

3 Transportation Alternatives, Terminal Velocity, February 2009

4 National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

5 New York City Comptroller's annual Claim Report