

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 127 W. 26th St. Ste. 1002, New York, NY 10001; fax 212-629-8334; or submit a comment through our web site. We look forward to hearing from you!



Safe Routes to Schools

My town has proposed a crosswalk to connect an elementary school and ball field to the Town Hall and Town Park. The road is a county road, and a pretty well-used connector. The crosswalk would not be at an intersection, but is in the reduced speed area (35 mph from 55). And southbound drivers are nearing a T intersection, which is not close enough to have people walk to for crossing. Generally there is not very much traffic; it is pretty rural (population of the town around 2000). County Planning agrees with the crosswalk and caution signs, and think maybe a school program to educate the kids about using it, but County DPW just informed us it is unlikely they will approve it....Planning and DPW meet next week to discuss it. Do you have any advice?

HEATHER JACKSY
PLANNER

SULLIVAN COUNTY NEW YORK

Dear Heather, The statistics that show that children will not survive an interaction with a car at levels greater than 35 mph. We suggest speeds of 15 or lower around schools so that if kids are hit by cars they will survive,

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but the desire is always to have no children hit by vehicles ever. We recommend engineering modifications to this intersections to make children and parents at ease and happy to cross.

What to Do When Doored

I have begun to use my bicycle regularly for work and running errands around my Queens neighborhood. I was doored by a driver (fortunately at a slow speed) while riding a few weeks ago. I was in shock after being thrown to the ground, but my instinct was to get the driver's car make and license plate number, although it was not needed. On the T.A. (very well-organized) web site have I missed a Q&A or a list of rider protocols for things like this that might happen on the street? Are there other steps I should have taken?

MAURA GEDID

Dear Maura, Very sorry to hear about your crash and am glad you are doing ok.

You can find legal advice, including what to do in you're in a crash, on our website at: <http://www.transalt.org/info/cycling.html#l> Regarding your crash, it is always necessary to get the license plate number and description of the car and file a police report. If possible, it is also advisable to get the driver's name and contact information. In a crash you should always call 911, and when the police arrive they will fill out a crash report.

Sometimes the police will say that they do not have to fill out a crash report or that it is not important to fill one out. In fact, they do have to (if you ask), and it is very important. First, for your records, insurance and medical expenses, you have to have a police report. Second, Department of Transportation traffic improvements and NYPD enforcement strategies are based on crash statistics, so if there is no crash report, in the eyes of the Department of Transportation and the NYPD you never crashed and nothing will be done to improve safety at that location.

The Enforcers

What is Transportation Alternatives doing to get the City to be more serious about bike lanes and the safety of cyclists? Every time I ride, there is always either an SUV or FEDEX or UPS or some other delivery vehicle double

parked in the bike lanes which endangers cyclists. If these guys got ticketed they would be less likely to double park in the bike lane. Can you please give me an update?

CAROLYN

Dear Carolyn, Transportation Alternatives co-authored the Bicycle Safety Action Plan with a number of NYC cycling groups. The Plan asked the City of New York to develop and implement an aggressive, ongoing enforcement campaign to deter drivers from illegal behaviors that put cyclists in peril. These include speeding, reckless driving, "dooring," driving and parking in bike lanes, unsafe passing, tailgating, and failure to exercise due care.

While the DOT recently announced plans a public outreach campaign to increase motorist and cyclist awareness and make clear a bicyclist's right to the road, in partnership with DOHMH, NYPD, The Office of the Public Advocate, the Taxi and Limousine Commission, AAA, Transportation Alternatives, and the Five Borough Bike Club, more attention is need for enforcement efforts.

The City should deploy NYPD bicycle units in this campaign, record statistics for summonses issued for these cyclist- and pedestrian-threatening behaviors, and publish them in the Mayor's Management Report and TrafficStat on an ongoing basis. Additionally, the City should update and clarify NYPD enforcement procedures so that bicyclists and motorists are treated equally, and that offenses that lead to a summons or warning for a motorist do not lead to arrest or vehicle (i.e. bicycle) confiscation if committed by a bicyclist.

We will be fighting for improved enforcement in the months ahead.

A Tacky Question

I was recently riding on the West Side Greenway near Riverbank State Park and I got a flat tire. When I stopped to fix the flat I found I had tacks in my tires! This was a problem a few years ago too and this malicious behavior must be stopped.

ANONYMOUS

Dear Anonymous, The Parks Department is trying to address this problem, T.A. has reported it to the Manhattan Parks Commissioner's Office and NYPD and is requesting increased PEP and police patrols in the area and increased sweeping of the path.

If you see tacks on the greenway or someone putting down tacks, be careful, ride until you feel you're at a safe distance and call the NYPD (the 33rd Precinct is closest to Riverbank State Park, 212-927-3200) and 311. Explain your location, the situation patiently and that this is a recurring problem. □