

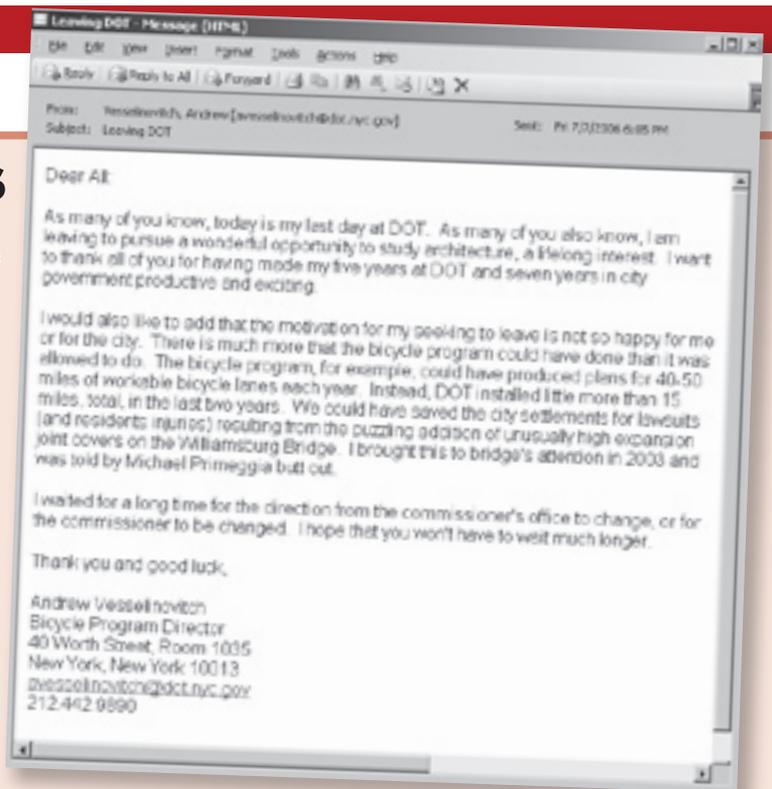
Frustrated by the DOT's Disregard for Bicycling, DOT Bike Program Director Quits

This summer NYC DOT Bicycle Program Director Andrew Vesselinovitch resigned. Here is the farewell e-mail he sent to colleagues on July 7, his last day. (The DOT has since hired a new bike program director.)



NOAH BUDNICK

Andrew Vesselinovitch



THE T.A. Bridge Improvement Squad is a volunteer-driven campaign to improve the safety of and

access to bicycle and pedestrian paths on New York City bridges. The Bridge Improvement Squad surveys path users, collects data on dangerous driving near path entrances, monitors bridge conditions, writes letters and attends community meetings to advocate for safer bridges and bridge path access.

The Bridge Improvement Squad wants you!

Contact T.A. at bike@transalt.org to join the Bridge Improvement Squad today.

Manhattan Bridge

Help win safety improvements on the Brooklyn-side of the Manhattan Bridge. In the summer of 2003, T.A. staff, volunteers and Recycle-A-Bicycle students surveyed Manhattan Bridge users to find out the most popular biking and walking routes to the Brooklyn entrance of the bridge's south path. Then, most people used Jay Street to access the bridge path. In July 2004 the DOT opened a new path on the bridge's north side,

and last summer the agency announced plans to improve access via Sands Street. Now, we need help updating our survey to determine which routes are cycled most and in need of safe space for biking.



NOAH BUDNICK

Bikers on Jay St. in Brooklyn need protection to safely access the Manhattan Bridge.

Queensboro Bridge

Help get the Department of City Planning to release its study on improving cyclist and pedestrian access to the Manhattan-side of the Queensboro Bridge. City Planning started this study four years ago and has not released or presented it to anyone. Last year the agency released final plans to improve Queens-side access, which will be implemented by the NYC Economic Development Corporation in 2007. In the winter and summer of 2006, the T.A. Bridge Improvement Squad conducted its own survey of path

safety and access. Most bikers and walkers said that getting to and from the Manhattan-side of the bridge is dangerous and inconvenient (see *T.A. Magazine*, summer 2006). Now, we need to contact City Councilmember Dan Garodnick and ask him to urge City Planning to release its study to improve biking and walking access to the Queensboro Bridge:

211 East 43rd Street, Suite 2004, New York, NY 10017
garodnick@council.nyc.ny.us



PAUL S. WHITE

Bike access to the GWB must be improved!

George Washington Bridge

The Port Authority's current construction on the George Washington Bridge requires cyclists to use the north path, and its 139 steps, to cross the

bridge. Though inconvenient, the construction is an opportunity for the Port Authority to improve the bridge's biking and walking path, but they need to hear what cyclists want. 24-hour access? A safer ramp to the bridge's south path? Better access to the south ramp via Cabrini Boulevard? Let us take advantage of the construction and push for these bridge improvements and make sure the Port Authority knows about any problems on the north path. Contact the Bridge Manager Robert Durando at the Port Authority:

220 Bruce Reynolds Boulevard, Fort Lee, NJ 07024, (201) 346-4005
panynj.gov/feedback.php

Triborough Bridge

In Queens, the MTA is diverting bikers and walkers to the Triborough Bridge's south path until summer 2007 while they build a new ramp to Wards Island and a new bike path on the north side of the bridge. Queens access is on Hoyt Avenue South at 27th Street. Help monitor path conditions and report problems to Ray Bush, the bridge manager:

MTA Bridge and Tunnels, Randall's Island, New York, NY 10035, (212) 870-6431
mta-nyc.custhelp.com □

Safety in Numbers In NYC

THE "SAFETY IN NUMBERS" phenomenon is proving true in New York City.

First documented in cities around the world and chronicled in research published in the *American Journal of Public Health*, safety in numbers dictates that the crash, injury and fatality rate falls as more people regularly ride bikes because faced with more cyclists on the streets, drivers become accustomed to noticing cyclists and driving safely around them.

The steady annual increase in regular cycling in New York City has added up to one-third more cyclists on the streets each day today than in 1998. During the same time, the number of annual bicycle crashes and cyclist deaths has decreased almost 40%.

Ergo, anything the City does to encourage and increase cycling—building greenways and bike lanes, creating secure bike parking, undertaking powerful public awareness and effective encouragement campaigns—makes cycling safer.

By the same token, anything the City does to discourage bike riding—mandatory bike licensing, bike ticket blitzes, compulsory helmet laws—will do more harm than good. Because compulsory helmet laws in other cities have decreased cycling by up to 30%, it is estimated that the increase in mortality due to an erosion of the Safety in Numbers effect would eclipse any safety effect of a New York City mandatory helmet law.



As they did one year before, cyclists gathered at City Hall to honor three New Yorkers who died in bicycle crashes this summer and again call on Mayor Bloomberg to make streets safe for cycling.

AARON NARAPSTEK

NYC Bicycle Master Plan Out of Date, Barely Touched

JULY MARKED THE ONE-year anniversary of the New York City Bike Safety Action Plan, the six-point plan to make city streets safe for biking put forward to Mayor Bloomberg by twenty New York City cycling organizations as cyclist deaths soared to twenty-four in 2005. This June, the deaths of city cyclists Donna Goodson, Dr. Carl Henry Nacht and Derek Lake reinforced the necessity of safe space for cycling. After one year what are the Mayor and his agencies doing to implement the Action Plan? What more needs to be done to make riding a bike in New York City safe for people of all ages and cycling abilities?

To the credit of the City government, portions of the Plan are being implemented. The NYC Department of Health, in col-

laboration with the DOT and NYPD, has launched a study of the past ten years of cyclist deaths and serious injuries. The study, which is rumored to recommend to making streets more conducive to cycling, is due to be released in late summer. These agencies and NYC Marketing along with the Public Advocate, cycling organizations and AAA are also developing a bike safety public awareness campaign, due out in summer 2007. The campaign will reinforce cyclists' right to the road and emphasize both drivers and cyclists' responsibility to follow traffic laws.

What the Mayor has not yet agreed to do, however, is update the City's antiquated, inadequate

and too often ignored "Bicycle Master Plan" and set a timeframe for implementing it. The existing plan, adopted almost ten years ago, is only 15% complete.

City Hall must update the "Bicycle Master Plan" with a timetable for completion, benchmarks for increasing cycling and reducing crashes, and modern bike lane and path design standards—all hallmarks of exemplary plans put forth by cities like London and Chicago. The plan should focus on creating protected cycling space, the most effective countermeasure to prevent crashes.

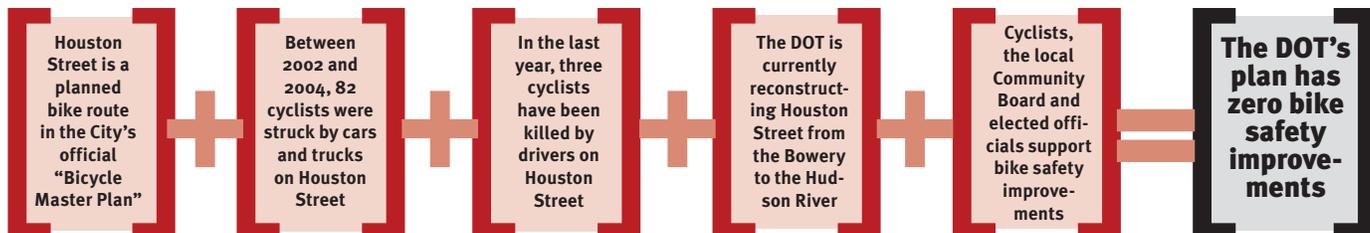
Implementing a modern bike plan will prevent future tragedies and encourage more people to ride. Failure to do so will show a disregard for cyclist safety and bike riding as a viable mode of transportation for New Yorkers.

TakeAction!

URGE Mayor Bloomberg to update the City's Bicycle Master Plan!

Mayor Michael Bloomberg
Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg
City Hall
New York, NY 10007
Fax: 212-788-2460
E-Mail: nyc.gov/html/mail/html/mayor.html

According to the DOT's fuzzy math, Houston Street needs no safety improvements...



Cycling News

More Bike Networking in Downtown Brooklyn

IN JUNE THE DOT'S Brooklyn office announced plans to stripe new bike lanes on Cumberland Street and Carlton and Willoughby Avenues in Fort Greene and Prospect Heights, Brooklyn. These new lanes will make useful connections in the Downtown Brooklyn bike network, slow drivers and encourage more people to ride, making streets safer for cyclists and all traffic. As of press time the DOT has not set an installation date for the new bike lanes, but the agency should not delay in making these commonsense street safety improvements.

The DOT plans to stripe:

- A southbound bike lane and signed route on Cumberland Street between Flushing Avenue and Atlantic Avenue

Brooklyn bikers can't wait for the DOT's planned Carlton Ave. bike lane.

NOAH BUDNICK



- A northbound bike lane on Carlton Avenue between Flatbush and Flushing Avenues
- An eastbound bike lane on Willoughby Street between Fort Greene Park and Myrtle Avenue in Bushwick.

The DOT also plans to traffic-calm Carlton Avenue between Park and Myrtle Avenues and install a southbound "reverse-flow" protected bike lane on

Carlton Avenue between Atlantic Avenue and Pacific Streets.

The new lanes will connect with each other and with the existing bike lanes on Dean and Bergen Streets, DeKalb and Myrtle Avenues and with the planned Brooklyn Waterfront Greenway. They will also help connect the Manhattan Bridge and Prospect Park.

Like the Dean and Bergen Street bike lanes, the new lanes on Cum-

berland Street and Carlton and Willoughby Avenues will better define traffic lanes on these one-way, one lane streets. This will slow drivers, "channelize" traffic and reduce crashes.

The planned bike lanes are supported by City Councilmember Letitia James, the Prospect Heights Neigh-

borhood Development Council (members include the Prospect Heights Association, Park Place/Underhill Avenue Block Association, Prospect Place Block Association, Prospect Heights Parents Association, Eastern Parkway Block Association and the Carlton Avenue Block Association), the Fort Greene Association, the Fort Greene Strategic Neighborhood Action Partnership and the T.A. Brooklyn Committee.

In June, Brooklyn Community Board 2 did not pass a resolution to support the bike lanes. Community Board members claimed the bike lanes will cause traffic, car crashes and bicycle crashes. In withholding their support, Board members also cited cyclists' failure to follow traffic laws, some calling cyclists "jerks." □

TakeAction!

THANK the DOT for the new bike lanes! Write to:

Brooklyn Borough
Commissioner Joe Palmieri
NYC Department of
Transportation
16 Court Street
Brooklyn, NY 11241
Fax: (718) 222-7256

Weprin Wants Community Boards to Approve Bike Lanes

In July, City Councilmember David Weprin (Hollis, Queens) called for legislation that would require Community Board approval for any bike lane striped in his district.

The DOT should consult with Community Boards when planning bike lanes, but Community Boards should not have approval or veto power over bike lanes. They are safety improvements. Should Community Boards approve crosswalks? No. Like crosswalks, bike lanes are not frivolities or discretionary.

The DOT plans to stripe new bike lanes on Commonwealth Boulevard. The bike lanes will narrow the travel lanes and reduce speeding. Instead, Queens Community Board 13 and local civic groups want the DOT to discourage biking there, not make the street safer.

The planned lanes are part of the City's "Bicycle Master Plan," which was developed in consultation with every Community Board.

NYPD Seeks to Dominate Everyday Bike Rides & Walks

IN JULY, THE NYPD PROPOSED changing City parade permit rules. Under the proposed changes:

- Any group of two or more cyclists or pedestrians traveling down a public street, who violate any traffic law, rule or regulation can be arrested for parading without a permit;
- Every group of 20 or more cyclists must obtain a permit from the NYPD;
- Every group of 35 or more pedestrians must obtain a permit from the NYPD.

These draconian rules would discourage New Yorkers from walking and biking, and the NYPD must withdraw them.

The proposed rules would put thousands of formal and informal walks and bike rides under

the Police Department's discretion. All organizers would have to navigate the Police

Department's bureaucratic permitting process. All routes would have to be cleared by the NYPD, and any group that leaves its permitted route could be arrested.

School teachers would have to get parade permits to walk their classes to the park. Walks, runs, training events and bike rides organized by groups like the Achilles Track Club, Brooklyn

Center for the Urban Environment, Bronx County and Queens Historical Societies, Five Borough Bike Club, Municipal Art Society, New York Road Runners, Staten Island Institute of Arts & Sciences and hundreds of private tour compa-



NOAH BUDNICK

NYPD's proposed rules would make thousands of casual group walks and rides unlawful without a NYPD Parade Permit.

nies would be under the NYPD's control.

Under the NYPD's proposed rules, any two people who jaywalk could be arrested. Any two cyclists who do not have bells on their bikes or take their feet off the pedals (violating NYS VTL 1232) could be arrested. You could not ride bikes with twenty friends without a permit, nor could you have a party with thirty-five family and friends and walk to an event in the park without a permit. These proposed changes would allow the NYPD to arrest any two or more persons that they want. □

TakeAction!

WRITE to Mayor Bloomberg and tell him that you are absolutely opposed to the NYPD's proposed changes to the parade permitting rules.

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg
City Hall
New York, NY
10001

Become a T.A. Street Activist
at transalt.org/takeaction/streetactivistnetwork.html to receive periodic action alerts.

City Examines East River Greenway Gap

IN RESPONSE TO THE requests of a coalition of elected officials and advocacy groups, including T.A., Mayor Bloomberg has agreed to investigate converting the temporary FDR Drive Outboard Detour Roadway to a permanent greenway. The FDR detour is a rare opportunity that the Mayor must actively pursue to complete Manhattan Waterfront Greenway. Otherwise, this chance to complete the greenway on the East Side will likely be abandoned as too costly and complicated.

In February 2006, Congresswoman Maloney, State Senator Kruger, Assembly Member Grannis, Borough President Stringer and City Council Members Garodnick and Lappin wrote to Mayor Bloomberg asking him to establish a permanent greenway on the FDR detour between East 54th Street and East 63rd Street.

In support of the east side elected officials, T.A. and fourteen local advocacy organizations also asked the Mayor to investigate retaining the detour.

This summer Deputy Mayor Doctoroff and Parks Commissioner Benepe wrote the elected

officials and advocates, stating their support of the conversion and outlining the challenges the project faces,

including a complicated permit process, encroachment on the river and costly retrofits. A sufficiently wide cantilevered path, like the one the Parks Department is building to bridge the gap in the Hudson River Greenway between 83rd and 91st Streets, could effectively address these issues. □

TakeAction!

Major community support is absolutely essential to convince the mayor to complete the project. **TELL** Mayor Bloomberg to complete the East River portion of the Manhattan Waterfront Greenway!

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg
City Hall
New York, NY 10007



WILL SHERMAN

A Tale of Two Greenways

TWO GREENWAYS, ALIKE only in name illustrate the power of greenway master plans. These documents, which City planners and local advocates spend months, even years, developing are detailed blueprints for all car-free paths. They must have strong short, medium and long-term designs to garner public support for construction, without which the paths will never be built. Multi-stage plans and designs also allow the City to implement interim routes that excite communities to advocate for the plans' more robust long-term designs. The City's two most recently released greenway master plans show what a world of difference strong plans can make.

In July 2005 the Department

of City Planning released the Shore Parkway Greenway Connector Master Plan to bridge the five-mile gap in the Shore Parkway Greenway between Bath Beach and Sheepshead Bay, Brooklyn. This master plan recommends "shared lane" bike pavement markings and colored bike lanes in the short-term and protected bike lanes and on- and off-street greenway paths in the long-term. While it will take pressure from local residents, businesses and elected officials to convince the City to build the car-free route, these recommendations provide a promising foundation for this project.

In contrast, the Departments of City Planning and Parks released the Queens East River and North

DOT rejected the Queens Jackson Ave bike lane to protect double parking.

Shore Greenway Master Plan in May 2006. Of 12 miles in the final plan, less than six miles are car-free biking and walking paths. The remaining six and a half miles are unprotected from adjacent motor vehicle traffic. Instead of safe, physically protected bike facilities along the entire route, the master plan proposes bicycle route signs and pavement markings for most of the final "greenway" design. Bicycle route signs and pavement markings do not protect cyclists from drivers. City Council Member Eric Gioia allocated \$500,000 for implementation of this "greenway" plan.

The Queens master plan states that the DOT rejected proposed on-street greenways and basic bike lanes because they would reduce the amount of street space available for motor vehicles.

Greenway master plans must lay out car-free routes that can be developed into real greenways, where people can bike and walk without fear of traffic. In omitting car-free routes, greenway master plans have scarce potential to improve and promote biking and walking. □

Inaugural NYC Greenway Summit Calls for City Hall Greenway Director

IN MAY OVER 60 ADVOCATES, representing 42 community and advocacy organizations, government agencies, elected officials and planners from the five boroughs attended the first-ever New York City Greenway Summit to discuss greenway planning, development and operation and raise the call for increased City efforts to build and maintain greenway paths. Advocates learned from and encouraged each other with positive examples and demonstrated the broad support for car-free biking and walking in the city.

The most common frustrations expressed by summit participants were the lack of communication between government agencies and the public, the lack



WILL SHERMAN

of public input and the lack of coordination between the dozens of city, state, federal and private agencies responsible for greenway funding, implementation and maintenance.

To address these problems and develop more greenways, Mayor Bloomberg needs to appoint a Greenway Director in his new

New Yorkers of all ages and cycling abilities want more greenways and space for car-free biking.

Office of Sustainability.

The Greenway Director would work with community groups, businesses and

government agencies to ensure that momentum and funding are maintained in greenway development and that community vision is included. The director

would also ensure that greenways are built as a network, with coherent connections and coordinated citywide planning and design. □

TakeAction!

TELL Mayor Bloomberg to establish a Greenway Director position to coordinate NYC greenway planning, implementation and operation.

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg
City Hall
New York, NY 10007