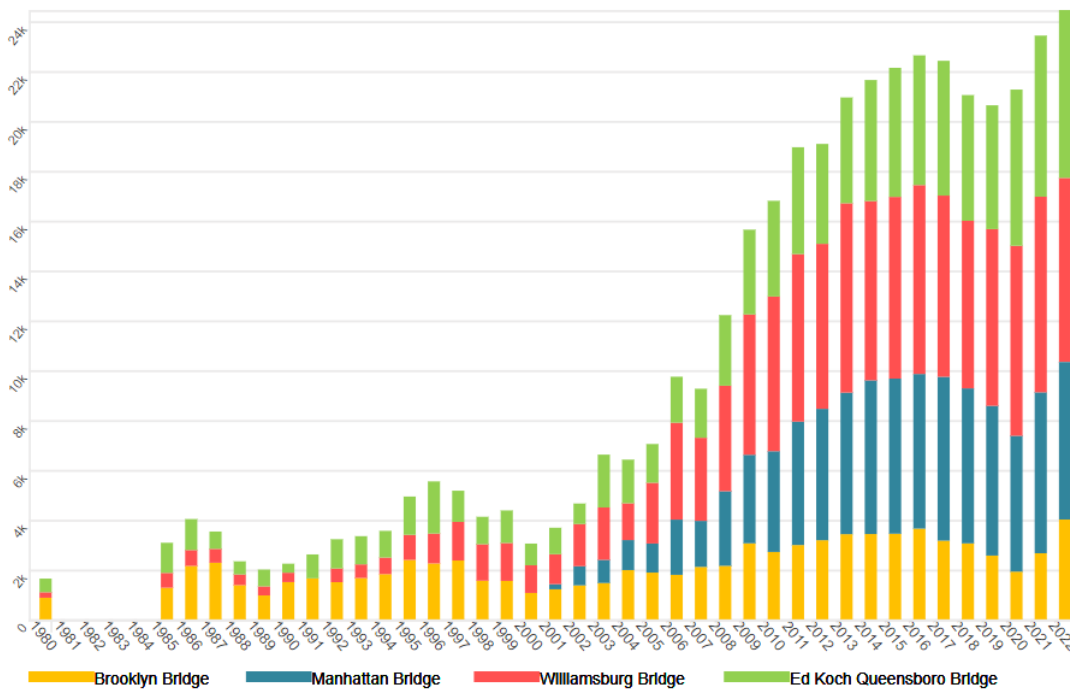


**NYC Department of Transportation Testimony Before the
City Council Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
April 24, 2023**

Good morning Chair Brooks-Powers and members of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. I am Ydanis Rodriguez, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Transportation. With me today are Sean Quinn, Assistant Commissioner for Street Improvement Programs, Rick Rodriguez, Assistant Commissioner for Intergovernmental and Community Affairs, and Julia Kite-Laidlaw, Director of Safety Policy. We are also joined by Chief Kim Royster, Chief John Chell, and Director Michael Clarke from the New York City Police Department. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on bicycles, micromobility, and street enforcement on behalf of Mayor Eric Adams.

I want to start by sharing the good news: bike ridership in New York City has reached a new all-time high. On a typical day, there are more than 550,000 cycling trips made in New York City, with cyclists biking more than 200 million trips annually. In 2022, we saw record cycling counts over East River bridges and in Midtown Manhattan. For the first time ever, more than 24,000 trips were recorded over East River bridges during an average in-season weekday.



East River Bridge Average 24-Hour Selected Weekday Bicycle Counts

Biking is a healthy, fun, and sustainable way to travel around the city. The number of New Yorkers who bike to work has more than doubled from 26,000 to 54,000 from 2011 to 2021. And bike trips at 50th Street in Midtown alone have increased from just under 20,000 in 2010 to nearly 38,000 in 2020.

Despite this, I also want to acknowledge the difficult year we are having in terms of cyclist fatalities. So far, 12 cyclists have lost their lives this year on New York City streets. We mourn their loss along with their family, friends, and neighbors. One life lost is too many and we are committed to continuing our efforts to ensure all road users can safely travel on New York City streets, regardless of whether they are walking, biking, or driving. I want to assure New Yorkers, that cycling in our city is a safe mode of transportation and together, in partnership with the Council, we can make this exciting and essential way to travel even safer.

DOT is taking a number of steps to enhance safety for the growing number of cyclists, including expanding bike infrastructure and conducting education and outreach. DOT continues to grow our 1,500 miles of bike lanes citywide—the largest network in the nation, which includes 645 miles of protected lanes. As we announced this morning, DOT is on track to install a record number of protected bike lanes in 2023 and to harden more than 10 miles of existing bike lanes. These projects include corridors with high ridership, bridges, and projects in Priority Investment Areas laid out in the New York City Streets Plan. Some highlights include:

- 3rd Avenue in Manhattan;
- Soundview Avenue in the Bronx;
- Ashland Place and Navy Street in Brooklyn;
- Goethals Road North in Staten Island; and
- Addabbo Bridge in Queens.

And to enhance safety on existing bike lanes, we will continue the bike lane hardening program to install Jersey barriers and the Better Barriers program to test new materials along bike lanes in all five boroughs. We will test new materials at targeted locations citywide, including Second Avenue, from 63rd Street to the Queensborough Bridge in Manhattan and at 11th Street and Jackson Avenue in Queens. The agency has also created the first wider bike lanes on 9th Avenue in Manhattan and has plans for more this year.

The City also continues to work to build a comprehensive citywide greenway network. Last month, the Mayor announced the City is developing plans for a 7-mile greenway along the Harlem River in the Bronx, creating a continuous path from Van Cortlandt Park to Randall's Island Park. The greenway would reconnect Bronxites to their waterfront while also creating a safe transportation corridor for cyclists and pedestrians.

This Administration is committed to leveraging new technology to improve the lives of New Yorkers. To ensure we are building the right projects in the right places, DOT recently launched an innovative pilot program to use advanced technology to measure transportation uses on New York City streets. DOT has placed street activity sensors at 12 locations around the city to collect data and generate detailed reports that will allow planners to better understand the uses of city streets and inform future street redesigns.

To help us build bike lane infrastructure faster, DOT strongly supports Introduction 417 sponsored by Council Member Restler. This bill would consolidate the Community Board and Council Member notice requirement for bike lanes with the requirement for

major transportation projects. This would create a single, uniform process for DOT to provide notice about major projects.

Passed in 2011 in response to the implementation of the Prospect Park West bike lane, Ad Code 19-187 imposes notice and comment requirements for Community Boards and Council Members on bike lane projects and changes, followed by an additional waiting period after DOT has received input. Given the seasonal nature of DOT's construction season, these requirements can result in projects being postponed until the following year and make coordination challenging.

Another section, Ad Code 19-101.2, imposes a similar but shorter process on "Major Transportation Projects" (MTPs)—projects that involve four or more consecutive blocks and remove at least one travel or parking lane.

This bill would preserve the important role of Council Member and Community Board input in major DOT projects. It would streamline requirements for public input on such projects and remove the unnecessary waiting period after a hearing takes place and DOT has received and reviewed public comments. It would allow DOT to follow a single timeline for notice and comments on its major projects instead of two requirements with different timelines and slightly different details. It would also reduce the amount of administrative work for DOT employees which would allow our agency to focus on other important projects such as additional outreach and planning.

Turning to education, earlier this month DOT launched a public service announcement in partnership with TLC to raise awareness of the deadly practice of "dooring"—opening a car door without first checking to see if a bicyclist is approaching. The video—set to the hit song by Chubby Checker—teaches New Yorkers to do "The New York Twist"—using the far hand to reach for the door handle, which forces passengers and drivers to look back.

DOT also conducts outreach to cyclists in their neighborhoods. In 2022, we distributed 15,500 helmets at 40 helmet fitting events and 9,600 light sets at 16 bike light giveaways, reaching many parts of the city with on-street outreach. We also debuted the Bike the Block program, using Open Streets as a venue for multi-block community events featuring local partners and Bike New York to foster and encourage bike riding for all. We hosted 10 events in four boroughs and saw over 2,000 attendees. This year, we are continuing to grow these programs. By Labor Day, DOT in collaboration with Bike New York will have 25 helmet fittings, over 10 bike light giveaways, six learn to ride events, and over 10 Bike the Block events. We will continue more robust bike outreach and education through the fall as part of our back to school and Biketober efforts, making 2023 the largest bike outreach year in the history of DOT.

DOT will also launch a public awareness campaign on the safe operation of e-bikes. A number of the recent cyclist fatalities were single vehicle crashes on e-bikes. The public awareness campaign will focus on educating New Yorkers about how to properly accelerate, brake, and operate at an appropriate speed. The campaign will include both public marketing and direct community education to teach new riders what to expect

when they operate an e-bike. DOT will engage folks who use shared e-bikes as well as those buying e-bikes at the point of sale.

And to enhance safety for micromobility users, last month, Mayor Adams announced *Charge Safe, Ride Safe: New York City's Electric Micromobility Action Plan* to promote the safe charging and use of emerging legal micromobility options. The plan focuses on the following key areas: promoting the growth of safe e-micromobility and cycling, promoting and incentivizing safe battery use, increasing education and outreach to electric micromobility users, advocating for additional federal regulation of these devices, and expanding enforcement against high-risk situations.

Finally, we continue to call on our colleagues in Albany to pass the ROADS legislative package which stands for Removing Offenders and Aggressive Drivers from our Streets. These bills aim to increase accountability among dangerous drivers and keep those with a history of dangerous driving behavior off our streets, which would enhance safety for all road users.

Now, turning to the rest of the bills before the Committee today.

Introduction 926

Intro. 926 sponsored by Council Member Farias would require DOT to conduct an annual study about cycling activity. DOT already posts cycling ridership and activity data on our Cycling in the City webpage and this information is also available through Open Data. Moving forward, DOT will be updating the website throughout the year as data becomes available, rather than annually. We would be happy to discuss this data with the Council.

Introduction 289

Next, Intro. 289 sponsored by Council Member Rivera which would require DOT to develop a searchable map of the city's bike lanes that includes current conditions.

Cyclists should have safe infrastructure to travel around the city. Pursuant to Local Law 124 of 2019, which was also sponsored by Council Member Rivera, DOT now requires that all DOT construction permittees maintain a temporary bike lane if such construction affects a street with a bicycle lane. This law was passed to ensure cyclists continue to have safe lanes even when streets are under construction.

While DOT supports the intent of this bill, we have some operational concerns about developing such a map that we would be happy to discuss further with the Council.

Introduction 501-A

Next, Intro. 501-A sponsored by Council Member Restler. This bill would create a new hazardous parking violation for obstructing a bike lane, bus lane, sidewalk, crosswalk, or hydrant adjudicated at OATH as well as a new citizen complaint system for these violations.

Compliance with our traffic and parking rules is essential, whether by private, commercial, for-hire, or government vehicles. Otherwise, our streets cannot function properly for all street users, and safety, mobility, and emergency response can be negatively affected. This Administration is open to exploring new models to enhance safety and help our street designs function effectively and to discussing this bill with the Council. The Law Department also continues to review the legislation.

Introduction 712

Next, Intro. 712 sponsored by Council Member Bottcher which would require DOT to report on evasion of red light and speed camera programs by vehicles with unreadable license plates. The City is already closely tracking the practice of obscuring license plates to avoid paying camera violations and other tolls. Rather than tying resources to monthly reports that could potentially raise further awareness about this practice and encourage more people to do it, we believe our focus should be on working with other agencies to address the problem. We would be happy to have further conversations with the Council about this issue and the steps this Administration is taking to address it.

Introduction 927

Next, on Intro. 927 sponsored by Council Member Gutierrez. This bill would require the city to create a task force to study e-bike charging stations for delivery workers. This Administration has already created an interagency Electric Micromobility Task Force that released the *Charge Safe, Ride Safe: New York City's Electric Micromobility Action Plan* that I mentioned earlier. DOT has several staff members on the task force and has a keen interest in the issue.

As part of this action plan, DOT has launched a pilot program in partnership with EDC and the Brooklyn-based business incubator Newlab called the 2023 DOT Studio. The one-year research and development program is focused on testing different technology solutions for public e-micromobility charging. As part of this curriculum, we are conducting extensive market research and stakeholder engagement to help identify the best battery charging solutions to deploy. Food delivery workers, FDNY, and other relevant stakeholders will be involved in testing these battery charging solutions to determine the ones that are more viable and responsive to New Yorkers' needs. By the end of the pilot program, DOT and its partners expect to have an in-depth understanding of what is workable and scalable in New York City and to use that information to plan future programs. We are happy to discuss this pilot and the task force further with the Council and how we can work towards our shared goal of enhancing safety for delivery workers.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I would like to thank the Council for the opportunity to testify today. We look forward to working together to create a safer city for pedestrians, cyclists, micromobility users, and drivers. We will now answer any questions.