

**DEPUTY COMMISSIONER  
NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
HEARING BEFORE THE CITY COUNCIL  
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION  
NOVEMBER 4, 2010**

Good morning, I am David Woloch, Deputy Commissioner for External Affairs at the New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) and with me here today is Ryan Russo, DOT's Assistant Commissioner for Traffic Management. Overseeing one of the most complex urban transportation networks in the world, DOT's number one priority is safety. Accordingly, we thank the Council for inviting us here to discuss Intros 370, 374, 376 and 377 relating to traffic safety, and to describe what we've already achieved and the new directions we are taking.

Today's hearing represents our shared commitment to making our streets safer for the millions of motorists, pedestrians and cyclists that traverse the City each day. Over the past 15 years, pedestrian fatalities in New York have declined at a rate more than three times faster than the national average. NYC's overall traffic fatality rate is less than one-third the national, and less than half the rate of the next 10 largest U.S. cities. Proud to be a leader in traffic safety, this distinction has only encouraged us to set the bar higher; in 2007, as part of our agency's Strategic Plan, Commissioner Sadik-Khan set a goal of reducing traffic deaths by 50% by 2030. In 2009, traffic fatalities hit their lowest level in recorded history, representing a remarkable 35% decrease from 2001. We have also seen a steady decrease in traffic-related injuries during the last decade, with an overall reduction of approximately 40% since 2001.

We continue to pursue new and innovative strategies and build upon our past successes, because quite simply, even one traffic fatality or serious injury in this City is one too many. In accordance with Local Law 11 of 2008, we recently released a landmark Pedestrian Safety Study & Action Plan, our roadmap for creating even safer streets. Through this rigorous examination of eight years of accident data, we identified the underlying causes of crashes, which will allow us to direct resources where they will be most effective. As I will describe, we are moving forward with ambitious new programs to re-engineer streets, increase public awareness, and to chart a course to make the safest streets in the nation even safer.

Our work over the past few years has provided a significant start. Both children and older adults are a major focus in the safety work we do – and our efforts for these most vulnerable street users represents the largest traffic calming initiative ever undertaken in this country. As the Committee is aware, we've completed safety improvements at 135 priority schools with capital work ongoing, and studies are now underway for 75 additional school locations. Additionally, we will be rapidly expanding the number of reduced speed zones around schools, implementing at least 125 by the end of 2011. As part of our Safe Streets for Seniors Program, we have implemented improvements geared to older adults in 10 neighborhoods, with another

10 to come over the next two years. From Fordham to New Dorp, from the Lower East Side to Brighton Beach, we have made dramatic safety enhancements through adjusted signal timing, the installation of medians, improved street geometry along with a host of other improvements. We also continue to pursue the installation of speed reducers throughout the five boroughs – an effort that has been championed by Chairman Vacca. With an addition of approximately 75 new installations every year, we now have a total of over 1,500 speed reducers on City streets.

In addition to these programs, we've been making aggressive traffic safety improvements at a growing list of intersections and corridors across the City. Park and E.33<sup>rd</sup> in Manhattan; Empire Boulevard in Brooklyn; Laconia Avenue in the Bronx; Luten Avenue on Staten Island; and Rockaway Boulevard in Queens -- the list goes on. More and more roads throughout the City are receiving the kind of safety improvements so many communities have asked for including refuge islands, road diets, sidewalk extensions, bicycle lanes, lane reconfigurations, signal timing modifications, markings, signs and parking regulation modifications.

The kinds of safety improvements we're implementing are fully detailed in DOT's Street Design Manual, which was released last year. It includes information about effective roadway design and guidelines for traffic calming devices. We have provided additional information on DOT's website which can be found on our FAQ page called "Slowing Down Traffic: Traffic Calming Information". So while we support the Council's goal offered in Intro 376 to make standards clear, we have taken significant steps to meet this objective. However, we are eager to speak further about this legislation with the Council and any additional action needed to better communicate our guidelines to New Yorkers.

Intro 377 also addresses the public's understanding of how DOT determines what safety improvements are needed where. As I've described, and will elaborate on shortly, DOT has become even more dedicated in our approach to traffic safety and more efficient at using the tools we have to make our streets as safe as they can be. As our eyes and ears on the street, public feedback is integral to this process. Whether through mail, email, 311, or even Twitter, New Yorkers are not shy— every year we engage in over 4,000 studies in response to their requests. To conduct this volume of analysis, we stretch our resources as far as we can to hit as many locations, and install as many improvements as possible every year. As you know, our Borough Commissioners and their staffs – one of the strongest agency outreach organizations in the City – are available precisely to help our constituents navigate through the Department and get the information they need. While we cannot issue 4,000 written summaries of our analysis every year without a significant impact on our performance, our borough offices are here to provide a personalized service – a service I know has worked so well for members of the Council. That said, we are certainly eager to discuss this further with

the Committee and consider what we can do to improve our ability to communicate with constituents.

In order to continue the work we've been doing, while meeting even more ambitious safety goals, we have developed a roadmap – DOT's Pedestrian Safety Study and Action Plan. Using state-of-the-art data and statistical modeling techniques, researchers examined hundreds of factors that could be associated with the cause of over 7,000 pedestrian injuries. This undertaking is unprecedented in terms of its scope and depth of research. However, we do continue to rely on crash data to determine where we focus our work. To be clear, we are not the originators of this data -- NYPD is the City agency that collects and compiles crash information. For this reason we defer to them for comment on Intro 374 which requires the compilation of annual bike crash data and section 2 of Intro 370, requiring the weekly posting of NYPD summons and crash data. Their position on the latter was shared at the Committee's April 28th hearing.

At DOT we continue to take steps to make our studies available to the public and to use data to inform our decision making. The Pedestrian Safety study provided us with key information on where, when, who and how accidents are happening. While time does not permit us to present all the findings I urge you to read the full report and I do want to offer some of the key findings today. Despite the fact that arterial streets make up only 15% of our road network, over 60% of pedestrian fatalities occur on these roads. We have also found that in crashes that kill or seriously injure pedestrians, driver inattention was cited in 36%; and that failure to yield to pedestrians resulted in 27%. In addition, the study found that serious crashes between 3 and 6 am are nearly twice as deadly as they are during other times. This gets at one of the most critical findings of the report -- speed kills. Yet, overwhelmingly and alarmingly, we have found many New Yorkers don't know the standard speed limit in the City -- 25, 40, 55, the guesses are all over the map. The answer is 30, and it's a threshold that makes sense. Consider this: pedestrians hit at 40 mph have a 70% chance of dying, while at 30 mph they have an 80% chance of surviving. This is why so much of the work we need to undertake on the engineering, enforcement and education fronts must address the issue of speeding. The Study and Action Plan lays out our anti speeding programs and other recommendations for improving safety. Key initiatives we will be undertaking at DOT include making improvements to 60 miles of corridors each year; addressing safety on major two way streets in Manhattan; creating a pilot for neighborhood 20 mph zones; and installing countdown pedestrian signals at 1500 locations citywide.

The study's enforcement recommendations include the NYPD targeting of speeding and failure to yield. We have worked with the Police Department to secure a grant from the Governor's Traffic Safety Committee for these activities as well as enforcement of cyclists who

violate traffic laws. The study also calls for collaboration between DOT and the Police -- a partnership that has in fact been bolstered in recent years. In addition to the consistent communication taking place between DOT Borough Offices with Borough Commands and precincts, we hold monthly coordination meetings between senior DOT staff and NYPD Traffic Division leadership. In fact the kind of dialogue called for in Intro 370, with NYPD and others, already takes place and has already been laid out in our Safety report.

While we will continue to engineer and enforce safer streets, the fact is that too many crashes result from behavior such as driver inattention, speeding, and driving under the influence. As called for in our study we are continuing to expand public communication through marketing campaigns such as "LOOK" encouraging users to safely share the road; and "You the Man", targeted at those most likely to drink and drive. We recently unveiled an iPhone app to reduce drunk driving by giving New Yorkers safe choices for getting home after a night on the town. It uses the iPhone's GPS to identify the closest TLC-registered car services and the nearest subway stations. Moreover, we've created new ads addressing the speeding issue raised in the report, which have begun to air and which you can find on our website.

We have also increased our messaging in respect to responsible cycling. We are in the process of creating a series of three Public Service Announcements, addressing cycling on the sidewalk, riding against traffic and not yielding to pedestrians. We anticipate these ads will air in the spring, when cyclists are returning to the streets in larger numbers. I should note that this will complement other outreach materials we have developed such as our Bike Smart brochure, the NYPD's cyclist enforcement efforts described earlier, and legislation we would like to work with the Council on to further address behavior by commercial bicyclists. Our focus on cyclist compliance is yet another new direction we are taking to better protect all road users in the five boroughs -- and undoubtedly as we move forward, there will be new strategies. This is why we support the concept addressed in Part I of Intro 370 -- requiring the Department to update the Pedestrian Safety Study and Action Plan every five years. We want to continue to work with the Council to move forward on the many safety paths we've embarked on -- and to ensure that the pace will continue to accelerate in the years ahead. Only through this collective vigilance will we meet our 2030 goal of reducing traffic fatalities and create truly safe streets in our City. Thank you for inviting us to testify and we will be happy to answer any questions at this time.

Testimony of CHEKPEDS (Clinton Hell's Kitchen Coalition for Pedestrian Safety)  
New York City Council's Transportation Committee Hearings on Intros 370, 374,  
376-A and 377-A  
November 4, 2010

My name is Christine Berthet. I am the Co-founder of CHEKPEDS, an 800 members - pedestrian safety coalition on the west side of Manhattan. I also Chair the Transportation committee of CB4, but do not speak for the Community Board today.

We applaud this legislation package to institutionalize the strategy to increase transportation safety for all street users; by ensuring that

- Pedestrian safety studies are updated regularly,
- Preventive and remedial plans are designed and implemented,
- Various agencies work in a coordinated fashion to reduce deadly crashes.

We'd like to make the following suggestions:

**Intro 370 stipulates that the DOT will provide a plan for addressing the findings contained in the quinquennial pedestrian study.**

The recently published study showed that 30% of pedestrian fatalities occurred at an intersection while a car was turning left. The proper safety solution the DOT has chosen in the past consists in installing an exclusive left turn signal, which gives dedicated time to pedestrians to cross without a conflict with turning vehicles.

Surprisingly the safety plan proposed by the DOT does NOT include such a measure. Instead it recommends " day-lighting intersections " a process that improves drivers visibility but has no proven track record of increasing pedestrian safety unlike the exclusive turn signal.

It would be interesting to understand how the DOT arrived at this recommendation and what safety trade offs were made. We encourage this committee to hold a hearing on that very subject.

We believe that the value of a human life should be a political decision, not an engineering one based on cost or time savings (BP?) We therefore suggest that the plan include (1) strategies recommended by the DOT include their cost and their safety efficiency (2) and include best of breed strategies, their cost and their efficiency.

**Intro 376**

We recommend that the most effective devices to reduce fatalities at intersections be mentioned by name in the law: leading pedestrian intervals, trailing left turns, dedicated turn phase signals, longer crossing time for pedestrians, Accessible Pedestrian Signals and speed limits.

It would also make sense to apply the law wherever there is a concentration of crashes.

Testimony of CHEKPEDS (Clinton Hell's Kitchen Coalition for Pedestrian Safety)  
New York City Council's Transportation Committee Hearings on Intros 370, 374,  
376-A and 377-A  
November 4, 2010

My name is Martin Treat, I am the Co- founder of CHEKPEDS, an 800 members - pedestrian safety coalition on the west side of Manhattan. I also Chair the Transportation committee of CB4, but do not speak for the Community Board today.

We applaud this legislation package to institutionalize the strategy to increase transportation safety for all street users; by ensuring that

- Various agencies work in a coordinated fashion to reduce deadly crashes.
- Measurable information on the ultimate outcome: crashes and the efficiency of engineering and enforcement to eliminate them.

We'd like to make the following suggestions:

**Intro 370 stipulates that the DOT will provide** crash data and summons data, a process critical to measure the efficiency of deterrence in addition to engineering. We stress here that, knowing how many crashes resulted in a summons and/or were referred to the district attorneys office in compliance with Elle's law or Diego and Hailey's laws, would be an additional level of linkage with the new legislation and may help accelerate the cultural change of NYPD personnel.

The interagency road safety plan should include representatives of the public, possibly nominated by each borough president, and a representative of the health department.

**Into 374**

Bicycle crash data should be in a format and with information consistent with car and pedestrian crash data already collected.



THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN

SCOTT M. STRINGER  
BOROUGH PRESIDENT

TESTIMONY OF MANHATTAN BOROUGH PRESIDENT  
SCOTT M. STRINGER

BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Hearing on legislation requiring bicycle crash data compilation and dissemination

Thursday, November 4, 2010

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Thank you Chairman Vacca and members of the New York City Council Transportation Committee for holding this important hearing on four pending transportation related introductions. Although I support all four measures, I would like to use this testimony to specifically address a bill introduced by Councilmember Rosie Mendez - Intro No. 374.

Last month, my office drew broad attention to the issue of bike lane safety with the release of an unscientific survey that found 1781 bike lane blockages and other infractions during morning and evening rush hours at eleven Manhattan locations. Among the measured categories most relevant to this legislation, observers noted 741 instances of pedestrians encroaching upon bike lanes, over 275 occurrences of motor vehicle blockages - including 50 taxi, livery and pedi cabs and 35 instances of city-owned vehicles blocking the lanes -, 242 cyclists riding the wrong way in a bike lane, 237 cyclists riding through red lights, and 42 instances where cyclists rode on the sidewalk on streets with a bike lane. Observers even noted a collision between a cyclist and pedestrian in a midtown bike lane.

What my study was unable to formulate was the precise level of danger that unclear bike paths and general disrespect for bike lanes and the rules of the road pose to cyclists, pedestrians and motorists alike. However, the unscientific results of my bike lane survey, along with recent tragedies such as the October 22, 2010 dooring fatality in an East Harlem bike lane, suggest that there is significant room for bike lane safety improvements.

Regrettably, a lack of reliable data on a City wide level prohibits an empirical approach to making bike lane improvements or increasing law enforcement in bike lanes. For these reasons, I strongly urge the passage of Intro No. 374.

By compiling and disseminating bicycle crash information by Community District, policy makers and interested community members will be able to make data driven judgments on the efficacy of local bike lanes. New data resulting from Intro No. 374 will lead to smarter enforcement of bike lane obstructions, quicker improvements to problem bike lanes, clearer

community awareness of bike lane safety issues and a less polarized public discourse on the purported safety or danger of certain bike lanes and corridors.

I am a strong supporter of bike lanes and the environmental, health and quality of life benefits that properly functioning bike lanes provide. However, it is clear to me that not all of our bike lanes are operating at their maximum potential and the City is in the dark about which bike lanes need the most urgent attention. This dearth of information puts the safety and well being of cyclists and pedestrians at risk.

I commend Councilmember Mendez for introducing this bill and urge all members of the New York City Council to support this important legislation. For my part, I look forward to working together with the City Council Transportation Committee and other interested stakeholders to ensure that New York City's bike lanes reach their highest potential.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important matter.





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Testimony of Paul Steely White  
Executive Director  
Transportation Alternatives

New York City Council  
Committee on Transportation  
Hearing on Introductions 370, 374, 376 and 377

November 4, 2010

Good morning. My name is Paul Steely White and I am the Executive Director of Transportation Alternatives. We are a non-profit advocacy organization with over 8,000 dues paying members and over 35,000 active supporters working for safer streets for New York City's pedestrians and cyclists. Our organization strongly supports the intent of Intros 0370 and 0374 which will enable government agencies to more precisely and efficiently focus their limited resources, and will ultimately improve the safety of millions who walk, bike and drive in New York City.

We strongly believe that the NYPD, not the DOT, is the logical agency to report on this data. As retired NYPD Chief of Transportation Michael Scagnelli said in his testimony at the April 28 (2010) hearing on this subject:

I strongly believe that one way to help reduce traffic injuries and fatalities on New York City streets is for the NYPD to make traffic injury, fatality and summoning data open and available to the public. The simple fact is that this information *already exists* in a form that could be easily released and made available to the public and other agencies focused on reducing traffic casualties.

According to the Bloomberg administration, 2009 was the safest year on record, and we know that the NYPD has the numbers to back that up. However, the general public does not have access to the data that supports this statement. We still do not know where the crashes in 2009 occurred, why they occurred, what types of vehicles were involved in these crashes and the volume of summonses issued by the NYPD for each type of moving violation. As proposed in Intro 370, weekly reports of crash and summoning data by borough are a step in the right direction, but this is a blunt instrument. Transportation Alternatives strongly urges the Police Department to publish weekly, precinct-level traffic safety reports, similar to their CompStat system and the legislation just passed by the City Council requiring hate crime and domestic violation stats to be regularly reported. Think about it: right now, community groups and elected officials like yourselves are often forced to make decisions that directly affect life and death, based on information from 2008, at best.

In addition to summonses and fatalities, the Police Department should also be required to report on traffic injury data and speeding-related casualties. This will enable them and other government agencies to direct their limited resources in a much more efficient and transparent way. Whatever limited resources are required to enable the systematic publication of existing crash and summoning



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data will pale by comparison to the ultimate gains made in efficiency and safety. For those who question whether this is cost effective, consider that traffic crashes cost New York City \$4 billion a year.

Transportation Alternatives also supports the Council's goal of improving dialogue between agencies and the public. As outlined in the *Street Design Manual* each change to street design is rooted in safety and undergoes an intensive review process within DOT, yet a better job communicating these deliberations will better educate the public and interested officials and empower them as insightful partners in the conversation to improve our city. Safety improvements are necessary improvements and the sooner we can install traffic calming devices, the faster we are working to reduce the 70,000 injuries in traffic every year.

As first announced in *Sustainable Streets*, DOT's strategic plan, the DOT Academy was intended to educate communities about DOT's priorities and processes. We are not sure if this program still exists but we would encourage the Council and communities to contact the DOT to ask the DOT Academy to come to their communities and even fund workshops if necessary.

We often work with elected officials, individuals and representatives from community groups who contact our office asking for help to make sense of why their request for a speed hump and other traffic calming measures was denied. Too often requests are responded to with general, template like language that ignores the specificity of the location. Residents also often take issue with the dates and times traffic studies are conducted. While we support clear and consistent standards for installations of traffic calming devices, we are aware of the diversity of the unique neighborhoods in the city, the need to be sensitive to context and are very cautious that additional processes could be hindrances to the accelerated pace of installation of these lifesaving and injury preventing devices that the DOT has committed to in the Pedestrian Safety Study and Action Plan.

The overarching issue with all of these bills is poor communication between the DOT and the public about how specific decisions are made. *Sustainable Streets* (and its annual progress reports), the *Street Design Manual* and the *Pedestrian Safety Study and Action Plan* provide the framework, but now New Yorkers need to better understand how these overarching goals and agency initiatives relate to their street, their neighborhood and their letter from the Borough Commissioner that says "a speed hump is unwarranted at this time."

New Yorkers will always debate some elements of how a street changes and we believe that debate is healthy. More facts, more data and more site specificity provided by the Police Department and the Department of Transportation will only serve to better inform these debates. In this era of doing more with less, the City must find ways to better communicate how it will direct shrinking enforcement resources and limited capital dollars for street improvements to the areas where they will make the biggest impact.



**LIGHTHOUSE**  
INTERNATIONAL

**New York City Council, Transportation Committee**  
**Hearing, Thursday, November 4, 2010**

Good Morning Chair Vacca and Members of the Transportation Committee, my name is Lester Marks and I am the Director of Government Affairs at Lighthouse International. As you may know Lighthouse International was founded in 1905 and is dedicated to preserving vision and to providing critically needed rehabilitation services and advocacy to help people of all ages overcome the challenges of vision loss. Lighthouse recently joined the Pedestrians for Safe and Accessible Streets (PASS Coalition), a growing coalition of organizations calling for the increased installation of accessible pedestrian signals.

I would first like to point out that the New York City Pedestrian Safety Study and Action Plan makes no mention

of people with a disability, and more specifically, people with a visual impairment. How can we talk about pedestrian safety without discussing people with a disability?

I am here to talk about the issue of accessible pedestrian signals. According to the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration Best Practices Design Guide, “accessible pedestrian signals provide redundant audible, vibrotactile, and/or transmitted information about the status of the coinciding visual pedestrian signal. Providing crossing information in a variety of formats enhances recognition and understanding of the information by all pedestrians, particularly individuals with vision or cognitive impairments and young children.”

The New York City 2010-2011 action plan includes the installation of countdown signals at 1500 intersections, but makes no mention of accessible pedestrian signals. The PASS Coalition sent a letter to the Mayor and the Department of Transportation Commissioner when the plan

was released asking for a meeting to discuss the installation of APSs throughout the city, but to date, has not heard any response. Cities such as San Francisco, Portland, and Charlotte, and countries like Sweden, Japan, and Australia all have had widespread APS installation and have had them for many years. In New York City there are only a handful of intersections with APSs installed. As we address pedestrian safety, Accessible Pedestrians Signals must be part of the discussion.

I would also like to mention a bill introduced by Council Member Brewer, Introduction 183-2010- which calls for the installation of audible pedestrian signals. This is a bill we are certainly in support of and look forward to discussing in detail, with the committee, at a future date.

The installation of accessible pedestrian signals will improve safety for people with a visual impairment and must be included in any plan to improve the safety of our streets. We urge the Mayor, the Transportation Commissioner and

this Committee to work with the PASS Coalition to increase the installation of APSs, and ensure the any plan to improve the safety of NYC streets is all encompassing.

Thank you for your time and continued leadership.

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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in favor  in opposition

Date: 11/4/10

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Barbara Backer

Address: 3 Washington Square Wg Apt 5-2  
NYC 10012

I represent: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: Our Streets Our Lives

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Name: Jack Brown

Address: 335 E. 6<sup>th</sup> St.

I represent: CAR/COLLECTION AGAINST ROGUE RIDING

Address: 335 E. 6<sup>th</sup> St. NYC 10003

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in favor  in opposition

Date: 11/4/10

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: MARTIN TREAT

Address: 400 W 43 St

I represent: CHALK PEDS

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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**THE COUNCIL  
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in favor  in opposition

Date: Nov 4-2010

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Address: 348 W 38th

I represent: CHALKEDS

Address: Soall

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Date: 11/4/10

(PLEASE PRINT)  
Name: MARIA HANSON

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Pedestrians for safe and

Address: Accessible Streets  
(PASS Coalition)

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(PLEASE PRINT)  
Name: Paul Steely White

Address: 127 W. 26th St. NY, NY

I represent: Transportation Alternatives

Address: \_\_\_\_\_



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in favor  in opposition

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Name: Lester Marks

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Lighthouse International

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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in favor  in opposition

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Name: Ryan Russo - Assistant Commissioner

Address: for Traffic Management - DOT

I represent: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
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in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: David Woloch - Deputy Commissioner

Address: of External Affairs DOT

I represent: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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in favor  in opposition

Date: 11/4/10

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Name: SUSAN RASRIN

Address: 305 W. 28 ST. #9H NYC 10001

I represent: CO-OP COUNCIL - PENN SOUTH HOUSES (INDIVIDUAL)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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in favor  in opposition

Date: 11-4-2010

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Marc Brumer

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Borough President - Scott Stringer

Address: 7 Centre Street

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