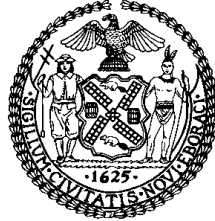


Transportation Committee Staff:
Elliott Lynn, Counsel
Alex Washington, Counsel
Rick Arbelo, Senior Policy Analyst
Chima Obichere, Finance Unit Head
John Basile, Finance Analyst



THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK
BRIEFING PAPER OF THE INFRASTRUCTURE DIVISION
Jeffrey T. Baker, Legislative Director
Terzah N. Nasser, Deputy Director

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION
Hon. Ydanis Rodriguez, Chair

January 29, 2020

Oversight: Improving Street and Vehicle Safety

INTRODUCTION

On January 29, 2020, the Committee on Transportation, chaired by Council Member Ydanis Rodriguez, will hold an oversight hearing titled “Improving Street and Vehicle Safety.” The Committee expects to hear testimony from the Department of Transportation (DOT), advocates and other interested stakeholders.

BACKGROUND

Vision Zero

In January 2014, Mayor Bill de Blasio announced that his Administration would commit to a “Vision Zero” initiative aimed at eliminating traffic fatalities from the City’s streets by 2024,

especially those involving pedestrians and cyclists.¹ Vision Zero seeks to achieve its goals in a number of ways, including street redesigns and roadway enhancements, more effective enforcement strategies, regulatory and legislative changes, robust public education and awareness, and safety improvements to the City's vehicle fleet.²

In order to reduce the likelihood of crashes and improve safety for pedestrians and individuals using bicycles, DOT has a toolkit of street redesign features that are meant to, among other things, prompt or encourage a change in driving behavior and increase pedestrian and cyclist visibility.³ In 2018, DOT completed a total of 139 street redesign projects, 97 of which were located at Vision Zero priority locations, increasing the total number of projects since the start of Vision Zero to 495.⁴ According to the City's Vision Zero Year 5 Report, these "engineering projects took a variety of forms in 2018," including pedestrian plazas, protected bike lanes, pedestrian islands, and raised crosswalks.⁵

While the measures implemented by Vision Zero have helped to increase safety, additional steps may be required to maintain the positive outcomes that have been achieved since 2014, especially since the city experienced a spike in traffic fatalities last year. Data released by DOT indicated that through December 30, 2019, there were a total of 218 traffic fatalities in the city,

¹ N.Y.C. Vision Zero Action Plan of 2014, available at: <http://www.nyc.gov/html/visionzero/assets/downloads/pdf/nyc-vision-zero-action-plan.pdf>

² *Id.*

³ *Street Design Manual*, New York City Department of Transportation, 2015, Updated Second Edition, available for download at <https://www1.nyc.gov/html/dot/downloads/pdf/nycdot-streetdesignmanual-interior-lores.pdf>

⁴ City of New York, *Vision Zero: Year 5 Report* (Mar. 2019), available at <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/visionzero/downloads/pdf/vision-zero-year-5-report.pdf>.

⁵ *Id.*

including the deaths of 121 pedestrians.⁶ This represents an increase from the 203 traffic fatalities recorded in 2018.⁷

During the first week of 2020, four pedestrians were killed in vehicular crashes. One of them was a 10-year old boy who was struck and killed by a sanitation truck in Corona, Queens while he was walking to school with his mom, who was also injured but survived.⁸ Another fatality occurred in Borough Park, Brooklyn when a 68 year-old woman was struck and killed by a cement truck while she was crossing the street.⁹ Then in mid-January within the span of 48 hours, three women were killed in separate traffic incidents in Brooklyn involving an SUV,¹⁰ a private sanitation truck,¹¹ and a city bus.¹²

Bicycling

The popularity of bicycling in New York City is growing faster than both the City's economy and population, at a pace twice as fast as in other cities in the United States (U.S.) between 2010 and 2015.¹³ DOT reports that between 2007 and 2017, daily cycling in the City has

⁶ Danielle Leigh, "New York City ends 2019 with overall increase in traffic deaths," WABC-TV, December 31, 2019, available at <https://abc7ny.com/5802477/>

⁷ See "Vision Zero: De Blasio Administration Announces New Crackdown on Dangerous Driving During the Holidays and Lower Speed Limit on Two of Brooklyn's Busiest Streets," December 23, 2019, available at <https://www1.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/637-19/vision-zero-de-blasio-administration-new-crackdown-dangerous-driving-during-the>

⁸ Brittany Kriegstein, Kerry Burke and Thomas Tracy, "Boy, 10, walking to school dies after he and mom struck by NYC garbage truck," New York Daily News, January 7, 2020, available at <https://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/nyc-crime/ny-mom-and-son-mowed-down-by-garbage-truck-queens-20200107-acu2pwn5yfg5zfbldezrocl7wi-story.html>

⁹ Anna Quinn, "68-Year-Old Killed By Cement Truck In Brooklyn, Cops Say," Patch.com, January 7, 2020, <https://patch.com/new-york/sunset-park/68-year-old-killed-cement-truck-brooklyn-cops-say>

¹⁰ Anabel Sosa, "83-year-old man fatally runs over woman with pickup truck in Brooklyn," NY Post, January 15, 2020, available at <https://nypost.com/2020/01/15/83-year-old-man-fatally-runs-over-woman-with-pickup-truck-in-brooklyn/>

¹¹ Olivia Bensimon, Ruth Weissmann and Vincent Barone, "Woman fatally struck by hit-and-run dump truck in Brooklyn," NY Post, January 16, 2020, available at <https://nypost.com/2020/01/16/woman-fatally-struck-by-hit-and-run-dump-truck-in-brooklyn/>

¹² Georgett Roberts, Larry Celona and Aaron Feis, "Woman struck and killed after kicking open MTA bus door in Brooklyn," NY Post, January 16, 2020, available at <https://nypost.com/2020/01/16/woman-struck-and-killed-by-mta-bus-in-brooklyn/>

¹³ Transportation Alternatives, *BikeNYC 2020* (Nov. 2017), available at https://www.bikenyc2020.org/dl/BikeNYC_2020_Report.pdf.

grown 134% during that time period, with an estimated 490,000 daily cycling trips, up from 460,000 daily trips occurring in 2016.¹⁴

However, in 2019, approximately 787,000 New Yorkers rode a bicycle regularly (meaning they reported riding a bicycle at least once a month in a New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene Survey), down from the nearly 793,000 in 2018 and 828,000 that was reported in 2017.¹⁵ Advocates have theorized that this reduction may be due to the lack of bike infrastructure in the outer boroughs.¹⁶

As of December 2018, there were roughly 1,240 miles of bike lanes in New York City,¹⁷ up from roughly half that in 2006.¹⁸ According to DOT, the City installed 20.4 protected bike lane miles in 2018, bringing the number of overall protected bike lane miles in the city to 480.¹⁹ However, the Administration fell short of its stated goal to install 30 miles of protected bike lanes in 2018.²⁰

Having a physical barrier that separates cyclists from traffic is imperative to cycling safety. A comprehensive report released by DOT in 2017 revealed that between 2006 and 2014, 3,395 cyclists were either killed or severely injured and that 89 percent of cyclist fatalities occurred on streets without bicycle facilities, like bike lanes.²¹ Research demonstrates that having physically

¹⁴ N.Y.C. Department of Transportation, *Cycling in the City*, available at <http://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/downloads/pdf/cycling-in-the-city.pdf>

¹⁵ Mayor's Management Report, p.259, September 2019, available at https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/operations/downloads/pdf/mmr2019/2019_mmr.pdf

¹⁶ David Meyer, *Fewer New Yorkers are cycling: city report*, N.Y. Post, September 17, 2019, available at <https://nypost.com/2019/09/17/fewer-new-yorkers-are-cycling-city-report/>

¹⁷ *Id.*

¹⁸ Winnie Hu, *More New Yorkers Opting for Life in the Bike Lane*, N.Y. TIMES, Jul. 30, 2017, available at www.nytimes.com/2017/07/30/nyregion/new-yorkers-bike-lanes-commuting.html

¹⁹ N.Y.C. Department of Transportation, *Cycling in the City*, available at <http://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/downloads/pdf/cycling-in-the-city.pdf>

²⁰ Gersh Kuntzman, *De Blasio Built 20.9 Miles Protected Bike Lanes This Year—Yet Falls Short of Record*, STREETBLOG NYC, Dec. 19, 2018, available at <https://nyc.streetsblog.org/2018/12/19/de-blasio-falls-short-of-record-miles-of-protected-bike-lanes/>.

²¹ N.Y.C. Department of Transportation, *Safer Cycling: Bicycle Ridership and Safety in New York City* (2017), available at <http://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/downloads/pdf/bike-safety-study-fullreport2017.pdf>.

separated bike lanes improves bike safety and can reduce instances of cyclist injuries and death.²² A 2014 DOT report on protected bike lanes found a 74 percent decrease in average risk to a cyclist, a 22 percent reduction in pedestrian injuries, a 17 percent reduction in crashes with injuries, increased travel times and even increased retail sales along corridors with protected lanes.²³

According to Transportation Alternatives' BikeNYC 2020 survey, two-thirds of the City's riders said they would ride more frequently if the City installed more protected bike lanes.²⁴ Of those respondents who had never ridden a bicycle in New York, but would not rule out trying in the future, 80 percent cited fear of drivers as a reason why they have not started riding yet, and 67 percent mentioned the lack of protected bike lanes making them feel unsafe.²⁵ Additionally, an analysis conducted by DOT of cycling fatalities since 2014 found that 60% of the fatalities occurred in intersections and that nearly 90% of them occurred in streets that did not have dedicated bike lanes.²⁶

These safety concerns have come to the forefront in 2019 with the recent uptick in cycling deaths. In calendar year 2018, there were 10 cycling fatalities reported in the city, the lowest number since 2013 when there were 12.²⁷ The comparative numbers almost tripled in 2019 when there were 28 cycling deaths in the city due to collisions with vehicles.²⁸ Of the 28 cycling deaths caused by vehicles, 25 of them were the result of collisions with larger vehicles such as trucks,

²² Michael Anderson, *The First Major Academic Study of Protected Bike Lanes in the U.S. Is Out*, PEOPLE FOR BIKES, Jun. 2, 2014, available at <https://peopleforbikes.org/blog/the-first-major-academic-study-of-protected-bike-lanes-in-the-u-s-is-out/>.

²³ N.Y.C. Department of Transportation, *Protected Bicycle Lanes in NYC* (Sept. 2014), available at <http://www.streetsblog.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/2014-09-03-bicycle-path-data-analysis.pdf>.

²⁴ Transportation Alternatives, *supra* note 36.

²⁵ *Id.*

²⁶ N.Y.C. Department of Transportation, *Green Wave, A Plan for Cycling in New York City*, July 2019, available at <https://www1.nyc.gov/html/dot/downloads/pdf/bike-safety-plan.pdf>

²⁷ N.Y.C. Department of Transportation, *Green Wave, A Plan for Cycling in New York City*, July 2019, available at <https://www1.nyc.gov/html/dot/downloads/pdf/bike-safety-plan.pdf>

²⁸ See "Vision Zero: De Blasio Administration Announces New Crackdown on Dangerous Driving During the Holidays and Lower Speed Limit on Two of Brooklyn's Busiest Streets" at <https://www1.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/637-19/vision-zero-de-blasio-administration-new-crackdown-dangerous-driving-during-the>

buses, SUV's or vans.²⁹ Eighteen of those deaths occurred in the borough of Brooklyn.³⁰ Further, yet no less tragic, another cyclist was killed in August when he collided with a pedestrian in Central Park bringing to 29 the total number of cycling deaths in 2019.³¹

Cycling Safety and Green Wave Report

In an effort to address cycling fatalities and to further increase cycling safety, on July 25, 2019 the Mayor announced the release of the "Green Wave" Bicycle Plan (Green Wave report).³² The plan would cost the city approximately \$58 million over 5 years to implement³³ and focuses on increasing the city's network of protected bike lanes with the goal of having a fully connected network by the year 2030.³⁴

Additionally, the Green Wave report spells out the plans that the city has for the 10 neighborhoods in Brooklyn and Queens that were designated in 2017 by DOT as Bike Priority Districts. These 10 districts were chosen due to the high number of cycling fatalities in those areas and because they lacked an inadequate amount of dedicated protected bike lanes.³⁵ In these 10 districts, the city plans to install more than 20 miles of protected bike lanes by the end of 2019, with a stated goal of installing 75 miles of protected bike lanes by the end of 2022.³⁶

²⁹ Clayton Guse, "As cyclist deaths in NYV hit historic high, safety advocates say politicians are finally starting to listen," New York Daily News, December 29, 2019, available at <https://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/ny-bike-deaths-2019-dot-street-safety-20191229-glhw2wm5ebbf3ogstugswyqupi-story.html>

³⁰ *Id.*

³¹ Tina Moore, Ebony Bowden and Aaron Feis, "Bus taking kids to Museum of Natural History fatally strikes pediatrician on bicycle," NY Post, December 18, 2019, available at <https://nypost.com/2019/12/18/cyclist-killed-by-school-bus-taking-kids-to-museum-of-natural-history/>

³² Vision Zero: Mayor de Blasio Announces "Green Wave" Bicycle Plan to Address Cycling Fatalities -- With Citywide Protected Bike Lane Network and Increased Enforcement, See <https://www1.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/368-19/vision-zero-mayor-de-blasio-green-wave-bicycle-plan-address-cycling-fatalities---/#/0>

³³ *Id.*

³⁴ N.Y.C. Department of Transportation, *Green Wave, A Plan for Cycling in New York City*, July 2019, available at <https://www1.nyc.gov/html/dot/downloads/pdf/bike-safety-plan.pdf>

³⁵ *Id.*

³⁶ *Id.* at p. 9.

DOT also plans to increase cycling safety by reducing the number of speeding cars by installing additional traffic calming treatments at 50 intersections throughout the city with a history of a high number of bike injuries in 2019.³⁷ Some of the measures that DOT utilizes to calm traffic include installing raised speed reducers like speed bumps and speed cushions, narrowing or removing lanes, extending or expanding a curb, installing traffic diverters and median barriers, and utilizing raised crossings that enhance visibility.³⁸

Since 30 percent of the city's cycling fatalities involve trucks, the Green Wave report outlines several initiatives targeted at improving the interactions between the city's cyclists and the various fleets of commercial trucks driving around our streets.³⁹ One of the initiatives includes a Vision Zero Truck Safety Task Force, which will examine improving cycling safety.⁴⁰ Other initiatives would expand the city's Off-hours Delivery program, develop additional instructional videos and material for the trucking industry, and expand the "Truck's Eye View" educational program.^{41 42}

Side Guards on Trucks

Since 2018, trucks have accounted for 46 percent of all traffic deaths in the city, up from the average of 40 percent during the period from 2014-2017.⁴³ Pedestrians and cyclists are particularly vulnerable to serious injury or death as a result of being pulled into the space between

³⁷ *Id.* at p. 16.

³⁸ *Id.*

³⁹ N.Y.C. Department of Transportation, *Green Wave, A Plan for Cycling in New York City*, July 2019, available at <https://www1.nyc.gov/html/dot/downloads/pdf/bike-safety-plan.pdf>

⁴⁰ *Id.* at p.17.

⁴¹ *Id.*

⁴² DOT developed the Trucks Eye View (TEV) program in 2011 to provide education to the public on the blind spots around large trucks. The Trucks Eye View program demonstrates to the public where the blind spots around large trucks are located. At events citywide, participants can sit in the driver's seat of a truck and learn about the vehicle's blind spots from a professional truck driver, to increase safety awareness for all roadway users. *See* <http://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/html/motorist/trucks.shtml/sizewt.shtml>

⁴³ David Meyer, "NYC traffic deaths rise for first time since de Blasio took office, *New York Post*," December 23, 2019, available at <https://nypost.com/2019/12/23/nyc-traffic-deaths-rise-for-first-time-since-de-blasio-took-office/>

the front and rear axles of large trucks. In the City, trucks account for 3.6 percent of vehicles on the streets, but account for 12.3 percent of pedestrian fatalities and 32 percent of cyclist fatalities.⁴⁴

In order to eliminate the dangerous gap between the front and rear tires, some trucks have begun to install side guards. Side guards were developed as devices to be installed on the sides of trucks that prevent pedestrians or cyclists from falling into the exposed space between the front and rear axles of large vehicles.⁴⁵ While current federal regulations require rear impact guards on trailers and semi-trailer trucks to reduce the risk of death or serious injury when passenger vehicles rear-end large trucks, there are currently no federal regulations requiring side guards.⁴⁶ However, several localities have adopted laws, resolutions, or ordinances requiring side guards: New York City, Seattle, Chicago, Boston, Portland, and Washington D.C.⁴⁷ In Washington D.C., the law requires all heavy-duty vehicles registered in the District to be equipped with side guards effective January 1, 2019.⁴⁸

In December 2014, U.S. Department of Transportation Volpe Center (“Volpe”)⁴⁹ and the NYC Department of Citywide Administrative Services (“DCAS”), which operates the City’s fleet of more than 30,000 vehicles,⁵⁰ conducted and published a study on side guards for the City’s

⁴⁴ New York City Office of the Mayor, *City Begins Installing Truck Sideguards To Protect Pedestrians And Cyclists*, The Official Website of the City of New York, (Feb. 9, 2015), <http://www1.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/101-15/city-begins-installing-truck-sideguards-protect-pedestrians-cyclists>.

⁴⁵ See Department of Transportation Urban Freight Initiatives, June 2015, available for download at <http://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/downloads/pdf/2015-07-20-urban-freight-initiatives.pdf>

⁴⁶ 49 C.F.R. § 571.223.

⁴⁷ See U.S. Department of Transportation Volpe Center: Truck Side Guards Resource Page, <https://www.volpe.dot.gov/our-work/truck-side-guards-resource-page> (last visited Apr. 13, 2018)

⁴⁸ D.C. Law 21-155. Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Amendment Act of 2016, § 605. (a-2), available at <https://code.dccouncil.us/dc/council/laws/21-155.html>

⁴⁹ See U.S. Department of Transportation Volpe Center: About Us, <https://www.volpe.dot.gov/about-usa> (last visited Oct. 21, 2019) (Volpe is a center of transportation and logistics expertise operating under the United States Department of Transportation).

⁵⁰ See Fleet Services, New York City Department of Citywide Administrative Services at <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/dcas/agencies/fleet-services.page>

“Vision Zero” initiative.⁵¹ The final report identified at least 4,734 City fleet vehicles appropriate for side guard installation.⁵² Following the report, the City enacted Local Law 56 of 2015 requiring side guards to be installed on vehicles weighing over 10,000 pounds in the City fleet and vehicles licensed by the City for waste hauling services, no later than January 1, 2024.⁵³ The 8-year timeline was designed to give the City sufficient time to install side guards to new City vehicles, which is more cost efficient than retrofitting old vehicles. As part of the City’s Vision Zero program, the City began retrofitting its vehicles in February 2015, at an average cost of \$3,000 per side guard.⁵⁴ As of December 2019, more than 2,700 of the city’s vehicles have been equipped with side-guards.⁵⁵

Currently, there about 90 companies licensed by the New York City Business Integrity Commission to collect putrescible and recyclable waste from private businesses.⁵⁶ These companies operate approximately 6,000 trucks weighing more than 10,000 pounds,⁵⁷ which means they must comply with the mandate enacted by Local Law 56 of 2015. Almost five years after the law, the private carting industry has been slow to implement the side guards on their fleets with

⁵¹ Alexander K. Epstein et al., *Truck Sideguards for Vision Zero: Review and technical recommendations for Safe Fleet Transition Plan and pilot deployment 9* (Dec. 2014), www.nyc.gov/html/dcas/downloads/pdf/fleet/DCASVolpePhaseFinal.pdf.

⁵² *Id.*

⁵³ See Local Law 2015/56. See also Stephen Miller, *De Blasio Signs Bill Requiring Side Guards on 10,000 Trucks by 2024*, Streetsblog NYC (June 17, 2015), <https://nyc.streetsblog.org/2015/06/17/de-blasio-signs-bill-requiring-side-guards-on-10000-trucks-by-2024/>; Stephen Miller, *Side Guard Pilot Almost Complete—Next Up, the Other 95% of City Trucks*, Streetsblog NYC (Oct. 2, 2015), <https://nyc.streetsblog.org/2015/10/02/side-guard-pilot-almost-complete-but-years-until-all-city-trucks-have-them/>.

⁵⁴ *Supra* note 44.

⁵⁵ See “*Vision Zero: De Blasio Administration Announces New Crackdown on Dangerous Driving During the Holidays and Lower Speed Limit on Two of Brooklyn’s Busiest Streets*” at <https://www1.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/637-19/vision-zero-de-blasio-administration-new-crackdown-dangerous-driving-during-the>
⁵⁶ See *Private Carting Study, Executive Summary*, New York City Department of Sanitation and New York City Business Integrity Commission, August 17, 2016, available at https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/dsny/downloads/pdf/studies-and-reports/Private_Carting_Study_Executive_Summary.pdf

⁵⁷ Julianne Cuba, “*Rogue Private Carting Industry Stalls on Mandated Safety Measure*,” Streetsblog NYC, October 3, 2019, available at <https://nyc.streetsblog.org/2019/10/03/rogue-private-carting-industry-stalls-on-mandated-safety-measure/>

only 922 of the trucks having side guards installed as of October 2019.⁵⁸ This has prompted some elected officials in the city to call for the 2024 timeline to be moved up.⁵⁹

High Vision Trucks

According to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, commercial vehicles have large blind spots around all four sides.⁶⁰ These large blind spots are created by the way trucks are designed and configured.⁶¹ The City has recently undertaken efforts to reduce the number accidents caused by these blind spots by changing the composition of their city truck fleet when making new purchases.

In November 2018, as part of the Vision Zero initiative, the Administration announced that the City would begin transitioning the city's fleet by purchasing high vision trucks if a suitable option is available.⁶² High vision trucks increase safety by minimizing blind spots due to their lower cab heights, smaller hoods and increased window capacity.⁶³ The City estimates that approximately 2,500 trucks could be converted through this initiative.⁶⁴

Truck Sensors

Many newer car models sold in the United States have advanced safety features. These features include sensors for blind-spot detection/side assist/collision warning, lane-departure

⁵⁸ *Id.*

⁵⁹ Julianne Cuba, "Manhattan Pol Wants Trucks To Be Equipped With-Life Saving Sensors," Streetsblog NYC, January 15, 2020, available at <https://nyc.streetsblog.org/2020/01/15/manhattan-pol-wants-trucks-to-be-equipped-with-life-saving-sensors/>

⁶⁰ See "Our Road, Our Safety: Large Blind Spots," Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, U.S Department of Transportation, available at <https://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/ourroads/large-blind-spots>

⁶¹ See "Eliminating truck blind spots – a matter of (direct) vision," available for download at https://www.transportenvironment.org/sites/te/files/publications/2016_07_Trucks_direct_vision_briefing_FINAL_0.pdf

⁶² See "City to Better Protect Pedestrians and Cyclists Through Use of New Trucks," available at https://www1.nyc.gov/site/dcas/news/008_18/city-better-protect-pedestrians-cyclists-use-new-trucks

⁶³ Jillian Jorgensen, "EXCLUSIVE: NYC to roll out 'high vision' trucks with fewer blind spots as part of Vision Zero," New York Daily News, November 28, 2018, available at <https://www.nydailynews.com/news/politics/ny-pol-high-vision-trucks-vision-zero-20181127-story.html>

⁶⁴ See "City to Better Protect Pedestrians and Cyclists Through Use of New Trucks," available at https://www1.nyc.gov/site/dcas/news/008_18/city-better-protect-pedestrians-cyclists-use-new-trucks

warnings and rearview cameras that can prevent accidental back-overs.⁶⁵ Unfortunately, most of the trucks sold in the U.S. do not come equipped with these types of technologies, unlike most European nations where the use of this technology is standard.⁶⁶ Some lawmakers have called for vehicular companies to add safety equipment, including sensors, to their trucks.⁶⁷ These sensors would allow truck drivers to see “images of pedestrians and cyclists around them, especially when they turn.”⁶⁸

Issues and Concerns

In October 2019, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration released a report that indicated 2018 was the deadliest year for pedestrians and cyclists in the United States since 1990.⁶⁹ As previously mentioned, in New York City, the number of cycling deaths almost tripled in 2019 compared to 2018, with the Commissioner of Transportation acknowledging that the year had been “difficult and challenging” under the City’s Vision Zero street safety plan.⁷⁰ So far this year there have been several high profile collisions involving heavy duty vehicles. This hearing will examine what the Department of Transportation, and potentially other City agencies, are doing to address critical street safety issues, especially surrounding trucks and other heavy-duty vehicles.

⁶⁵ Tori Tellem, “Top 10 High-Tech Car Safety Technologies,” Edmunds.com, May 12, 2009, available at <https://www.edmunds.com/car-reviews/top-10/top-10-high-tech-car-safety-technologies.html>

⁶⁶ Julianne Cuba, “Manhattan Pol Wants Trucks To Be Equipped With-Life Saving Sensors,” Streetsblog NYC, January 15, 2020, available at <https://nyc.streetsblog.org/2020/01/15/manhattan-pol-wants-trucks-to-be-equipped-with-life-saving-sensors/>

⁶⁷ See “New York Leaders Discuss How to Prevent Pedestrian Accidents Involving Trucks,” CBS New York, January 14, 2020, available at <https://newyork.cbslocal.com/2020/01/14/new-york-truck-safety-discussion/>

⁶⁸ Julianne Cuba, “Manhattan Pol Wants Trucks To Be Equipped With-Life Saving Sensors,” Streetsblog NYC, January 15, 2020, available at <https://nyc.streetsblog.org/2020/01/15/manhattan-pol-wants-trucks-to-be-equipped-with-life-saving-sensors/>

⁶⁹ See “Traffic Safety Facts, 2018 Fatal Motor Vehicles Crashes: Overview,” National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation, October 2019, available at <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/812826>

⁷⁰ Christina Goldbaum, “6 Pedestrians in 3 Days: A Deadly Spate of Crashes in N.Y.C.,” The New York Times, December 22, 2019, available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/22/nyregion/pedestrian-deaths-nyc.html>