

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON AGING  
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

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December 3, 2009

Start: 10:20 am

Recess: 12:20 pm

HELD AT: Council Chambers  
City Hall

B E F O R E:

JOHN C. LIU  
Chairperson, Transportation

MELISSA Mark-VIVERITO  
Acting Chairperson, Aging

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Council Member Bill de Blasio  
Council Member Simcha Felder  
Council Member Lewis A. Fidler  
Council Member Daniel R. Garodnick  
Council Member Vincent M. Ignizio  
Council Member Melinda R. Katz  
Council Member G. Oliver Koppell  
Council Member Jessica S. Lappin  
Council Member Rosie Mendez  
Council Member Domenic M. Recchia,  
Jr.  
Council Member Ydanis Rodriguez

## A P P E A R A N C E S [CONTINUED]

## COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Council Member Diana Reyna  
Council Member Larry B. Seabrook  
Council Member Eric Ulrich  
Council Member James Vacca  
Council Member Peter F. Vallone,  
Jr.  
Council Member Albert Vann  
Council Member David Yassky

## A P P E A R A N C E S [CONTINUED]

John C. Liu  
Opening Statement  
Chairperson  
Committee on Transportation

Melissa Mark-Viverito  
Opening Statement  
Acting Chairperson  
Committee on Aging

David Woloch  
Deputy Commissioner  
External Affairs Division  
Department of Transportation

Gerard Soffian  
Acting Deputy Commissioner  
Traffic Operations Division  
Department of Transportation

Ann Marie Dougherty  
Chief of Research Implementation and Safety  
Traffic Operations Division  
Department of Transportation

Karen Resnick  
Deputy Commissioner  
External Affairs Division  
Department for the Aging

Written testimony:  
Linda Rosenthal  
Assembly Member  
New York State Assembly

Noah Budnick  
Senior Policy Advisor  
Transportation Alternatives

Ya-Ting Liu  
Federal Advocate  
Tri-State Transportation Campaign

## A P P E A R A N C E S [CONTINUED]

Patricia Dolan  
Director  
Queens Connection  
Queens Community House

Stephanie Pinder  
Lincoln Square Neighborhood Center

Carolyn Stem  
New York Academy of Medicine

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3 [START 1001.MP3]

4 MR. NICHOLAS ECONOMOU: Thursday  
5 December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2009, Committee on Transportation  
6 jointly with the Committee on Aging recorded by  
7 Staffieri and Economou.

8 [END 1001.MP3]

9 [START 1002.MP3]

10 CHAIRPERSON LIU: Good morning.

11 MR. ECONOMOU: Quiet please.

12 CHAIRPERSON LIU: Thanks Nick.

13 Nick runs a tight ship in this room.

14 ACTING CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO:

15 Yes he does.

16 CHAIRPERSON LIU: Oh boy. All  
17 right. Well welcome to this morning's Joint City  
18 Council Hearing of the Committees on Aging and on  
19 Transportation. My name is John Liu and I have  
20 the privilege of chairing the Transportation  
21 hearing. Today we've convened for the purpose of  
22 conducting oversight on the issue of what is New  
23 York City doing to make New York, to make streets  
24 safer for our seniors.

25 A recent report by Transportation  
for America, a coalition of transportation

advocacy groups, found that one-third of all traffic fatalities were pedestrian deaths. Senior pedestrians face even greater perils. The report found that senior pedestrians over 65 years old face a 66% greater chance of being killed while walking than those under 65. Pedestrians over 75 years old face a fatality rate 200% higher than for pedestrians under 65.

Between 2007 and 2008, New York State had 3.73 pedestrian deaths per 100,000 people aged 65 and older which placed us third after Hawaii and California. The national average is 2.33 per 100,000 people 65 and older. To the credit of City officials, New York City started to tackle the issue of senior pedestrian safety as early as January 2008 when the Mayor and the Transportation Commissioner and the Aging Commissioner announced a Safety Streets for Seniors--a Safe Streets for Seniors Initiative.

And under this initiative, DOT engineers identified 25 neighborhoods with a high density of seniors and a high number of pedestrian accidents or injuries. The 25 areas that were chosen have been in Brooklyn, Brighton Beach,

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Borough Park, Bensonhurst, Sheepshead Bay,  
Midwood, Greenport and East Flatbush. In Queens:  
Flushing, Jackson Heights, Jamaica Hills, Rego  
Park and Sunnyside. In Manhattan: the Lower East  
Side, Chinatown, Washington Heights, Hamilton  
Heights, Upper West Side, Yorkville, Stuyvesant  
and Chelsea. In the Bronx: Fordham and University  
Heights, Mott Haven, Pelham Gardens and the East  
Concourse. And in Staten Island: New Dorp, Hylan  
Boulevard.

To address some of the issues faced  
by senior pedestrians such as insufficient time to  
cross the streets, broken or missing pedestrian  
ramps and hard to see signs, DOT made improvements  
in these areas such as adding curb extensions,  
adjusting signal timing and improving signage. We  
will hear from officials from DOT and Department  
for the Aging about whether these improvements  
have improved senior pedestrian safety. And a  
number of other programs they have been successful  
in implementing.

We've been joined this morning by  
Council Members James Vacca of the Bronx; our new  
Council Member from Washington Heights,

congratulations, Ydanis Rodriguez; and Council Member Maria Arroyo who is the Chair of the Council's Committee on Aging is in route from a previous engagement. She will be most ably, sat in for by Council Member Melissa Mark-Viverito who will be the interim Chair of the Committee on Aging. And with that I turn it over to Council Member Mark-Viverito for her opening statements.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO:

Thank you Mr. Chair and as you mentioned, I'm standing in for, as I'm the Chair of the Senior Centers Subcommittee of the Aging Committee, standing in for the Chair Maria del Carmen Arroyo, who's actually at a hearing with some bills, some legislation that she has sponsored in the Public Safety Committee. So I wanted to really thank you Mr. Liu, Chair of the Transportation Committee for agreeing to hold this hearing jointly with the Committee on Aging.

The hearing will focus on what we can do in order to make the City's streets more age-friendly. As many may be aware the City Council in partnership with the Mayor and the New York Academy of Medicine have embarked on a



project to develop initiatives and ideas that can make our City more accommodating and welcoming to the needs of older persons.

That project, called the Age-Friendly New York City Initiative has already come up with numerous ideas that government can develop to make New York more age friendly. One such idea which is our focus today is the Safe Streets for Senior Program that is run by the Department of Transportation. And you've, Mr. Chair, cited some of those statistics, unfortunate statistics, that indicate the need for such a program.

The Safe Streets for Senior Program aims to reduce this threat to senior primarily by identifying neighborhoods with a high density of seniors and pedestrian accidents and making safety improvements to the area such as adding curb extensions, upgraded signage, adding pedestrian refuge curbs, and increasing signal timing.

We look forward to hearing how this program is progressing and whether improvements made to date have actually resulted in safer streets for senior pedestrians. So with that I guess we'll get started. Thank you.

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CHAIRPERSON LIU: Thank you Council  
Member Mark-Viverito. We've also been joined by  
Council Member Diana Reyna of Brooklyn and Queens.  
And we have a number of hearings going on  
concurrently this morning so I believe we will all  
have to step out at some point to cast votes  
across the street. In any event I am pleased to  
be joined this morning by a number of  
distinguished officials of the Administration.  
We'll turn it over to Deputy Commissioner David  
Woloch, leading off. I'll leave you to introduce  
everybody else.

COMMISSIONER DAVID WOLOCH: Okay.  
Good morning. I'm David Woloch, Deputy  
Commissioner for External Affairs at the New York  
City Department of Transportation. And with me  
here today, to my far right is Gerard Soffian who  
is the Acting Deputy Commissioner for Traffic  
Operations at DOT, and to my left is Ann Marie  
Dougherty who's the Chief of Research  
Implementation and Safety from our Traffic  
Operations Division, and also to my immediate  
right is Karen Resnick who's my counterpart,  
Deputy Commissioner for External Affairs at the

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Department for the Aging. And thank you for  
inviting us all to discuss our Safe Streets for  
Seniors Program.

Ensuring the safety of our streets  
and on our streets throughout the neighborhoods of  
all five Boroughs is DOT's top priority. Safe  
Streets for Seniors, the largest program of its  
kind ever undertaken in the United States, targets  
the most vulnerable New Yorkers, senior citizens.  
Our safety work in recent years has yielded  
enormous dividends. Traffic fatalities in New  
York City have decreased 30% since 2001 and hit an  
all-time low in 2007. However, individuals 65 and  
over who make up only 12% of the City's population  
were involved in nearly 39% of the City's fatal  
pedestrian crashes during a recent 3-year period.

In 2008 New York City became the  
first major US city to create a Pedestrian Safety  
Program targeted specifically for seniors, aimed at  
lowering their over-representation in pedestrian  
fatalities and to improve their public health and  
mobility. As part of Safe Streets for Seniors,  
DOT used geospatial analysis to identify 25 senior  
pedestrian focus areas that have a high density of

senior pedestrian fatalities and severe injuries.

Engineers have been and will continue to evaluate pedestrian conditions in these neighborhoods from a senior's perspective and make engineering changes such as extending the time pedestrians are allotted to cross the street, and shortening crossing distances, altering curbs and sidewalks, restricting vehicle turns and narrowing roadways.

Detailed crash data analysis reveals that a high percentage of pedestrian senior fatalities and severe injuries have occurred in crosswalks during the pedestrian phase, with driver failure to yield or driver error reported as contributing factors. These crash attributes indicate that senior pedestrians do not have enough time to cross the street, are not sufficiently visible to drivers, and that turning vehicles are a particular safety threat.

Site visits also reveal broken or missing pedestrian ramps, faded markings and poor drainage blocking crosswalks. According, DOT has developed a toolbox to create safer, more accessible crossings. By installing LPIs, Leading

Pedestrian Intervals, to provide conflict-free crossing time, initiating longer flashing don't walk phases to accommodate slower walkers, adding crossing time where feasible, redesigning roadways to reduce crossing distances and slow turning vehicles, installing high visibility crosswalks, upgrading pedestrian infrastructure with new pedestrian ramps, curb extensions and green refuge islands, and initiating traffic calming measures such as narrowed roadways with left turn bays or buffered parking lanes.

With the help of transportation consultants, DOT designs, SPFA improvements, presents them to local Community Boards for input and constructs projects either in-house or in coordination with the Department of Design and Construction.

To date improvements in six of these areas have been implemented: as the Chair had mentioned earlier, Brighton Beach in Brooklyn, Lower East Side in Manhattan, Flushing in Queens, University Heights Fordham and Pelham Gardens in the Bronx and Hyland New Dorp in Staten Island. Our preliminary before and after crash analysis

for our pilot areas shows the following improvements. Pedestrian injuries decreased by 49% on a portion of Ocean Parkway where pedestrian refuge islands were installed and the roadway was narrowed in the Brighton Beach area. Pedestrian injuries decreased by 34% on Christy Street in the Lower East Side where a road diet including pedestrian refuge islands and bike lanes were installed. Pedestrian injuries decreased by 20% at the Main Street Casino Boulevard intersection in the Flushing SPFA where a pedestrian refuge island was installed and signal timing changes were implemented.

Not only have we seen improvements for seniors and other pedestrians but cyclists and vehicle occupant injuries have decreased subsequent to the completion of these projects. Despite successes at these locations, we're going to continue to monitor conditions and evaluate feedback from the community ensure that safety levels are maintained and improved upon.

In conjunction with physical improvements, working closely with the Department for the Aging, DOT's Safety Education Program has

scheduled presentations at senior centers in the vicinity of the six SPFAs to inform older adults about the changes to retime lights, pedestrian signals, refurbished signage and other changes, as well as to teach them how to best utilize the improvements we've made. Often our teams make repeat visits if requested and remain available to answer questions as they arise.

Our Senior Safety Education Program is not limited solely to the Safe Streets Program; the program is available to all seniors citywide. Our teams visit senior centers, health fairs and other events every year throughout the five Boroughs. In fact last year approximately 11,500 seniors took part in our Safety Training Programs.

All of our engineering and education work is starting to pay dividends. In the past year, to date, the older adult population has gone from accounting for 39% of total pedestrian fatalities to 24% but our work to improve pedestrian conditions for our senior citizens must be ongoing and is becoming increasingly more important. Over the next 25 years the number of New Yorkers over the age of 65

is going to nearly double. By 2030, 20% of the City's residents will be seniors and we need to be prepared.

We're working tirelessly to bring these results to more neighborhoods across the City. Improvements in nine additional areas are currently under view and ten new studies will begin in early January for the remaining areas.

Safe Streets for Seniors is funded by Federal, State and local sources and the amount of long-term capital work we can do is largely determined by the funding we receive. Along with our Safe Routes to Schools Program, we urge the Council to consider Safe Streets for Reso-A allocations and that you encourage your Borough President and colleagues in the State to devote their Reso-A and multi-modal funds so we may implement capital improvements quicker and at more locations.

Along with our Safe Routes for Schools initiative this project represents the largest traffic calming project undertaken in this country and with your help we can take it even further. Thank you for the opportunity to testify



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before you today. And we'd be happy to answer any questions that you have.

CHAIRPERSON LIU: Thank you.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO:

Are we going along with the testimony--?

COMMISSIONER WOLOCH: We can always come back to the--to the slides.

CHAIRPERSON LIU: Thank you very much Commissioner Woloch. We've been joined by Council Members Vincent Ignizio of Staten Island; Dan Garodnick of Manhattan; Matthew Eugene of Brooklyn; Oliver Koppell of the Bronx; and Gale Brewer of Manhattan; and Eric Ulrich of Queens. Congratulations, the guy just got married. That is dedication. Congratulations to you Eric, my condolences to you.

[Laughter]

CHAIRPERSON LIU: In any event, thank you very much for the testimony, Deputy Commissioner Woloch and I congratulate the DOT and DFTA for putting this program together. It is a pioneering feat all across the United States and I'm sure other cities and municipalities will follow suit as their respective populations being

1  
2 to age more as well. And as you know it is a very  
3 sensitive issue for many Council Members because  
4 of our constituents, some of our most vocal  
5 constituents have had to deal with the  
6 difficulties of just traveling about.

7 One of the things that we had  
8 talked about early on as kind of part of this  
9 process was the countdown traffic signals. Has  
10 there been any progress with the pilot programs  
11 for those countdown signals and is that part of  
12 this or is that totally separate?

13 COMMISSIONER WOLOCH: It's a  
14 separate initiative but I think it's among, I  
15 think, the larger toolbox that we're working on to  
16 make streets safer. We had done an initial pilot  
17 with a very small number of locations a couple of  
18 years ago. The results, I think, perhaps because  
19 the number of locations was so small were  
20 inconclusive so we broadened the pilot so we now  
21 have rather than just one location in each Borough  
22 where we've implemented a countdown clock; we have  
23 essentially a corridor in each Borough where we've  
24 installed them. And we're in the process of  
25 evaluating how that's working.

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CHAIRPERSON LIU: All right. And  
is there some kind of timetable for when these  
pilot programs will be concluded and a conclusion  
made as to whether these, whether there is a  
useful purpose for the countdown signals in New  
York City?

MR. GERARD SOFFIAN: Just to  
elaborate just a little bit further--

CHAIRPERSON LIU: [Interposing]  
Just bring the mic closer please, thank you, and  
introduce yourself for the record.

MR. SOFFIAN: Yes. I'm Gerard  
Soffian, the Acting Deputy Commissioner for  
Traffic over at the Department of Transportation.  
The study now is expanded to 25 locations citywide  
to look at how well these countdown signals  
perform. Are pedestrians getting across the  
intersections before the light turns, before they  
get the don't walk signal? How much improvement  
will we see in that?

And also very importantly, we want  
to see how motorists behave when they see the  
clock start ticking down to 5, 4, 3, are they  
going to accelerate and try to get through that

intersection at the last second or are they also going to be, as they should, comply with the traffic signal as it comes up.

So this study is now in its phase where we've finished collecting the before data. We need to know what the behavior of motorists and pedestrians are at these locations before the countdown signals are installed. Now that the signals are in place, we are again collecting the data as to the behavior of the pedestrians and the motorists. And we should have the study by the middle of next year in terms of are we actually improving safety as a result of this. And if we do, we would rapidly implement these in other places around the City.

CHAIRPERSON LIU: All right. And is it still an issue that the drivers would be able to see the countdown signals because I thought there were ways in which the signals would be designed so that you'd have to be standing in the crosswalk, otherwise you wouldn't be able to see it, just based on the way the signals are designed?

MR. SOFFIAN: Well the signals are

1 designed, of course, oriented toward pedestrians  
2 therefore they are oriented towards pedestrians in  
3 the crosswalk. Those are the ones for whom it is  
4 most prominent but motorists though can see it  
5 especially if they're--it depends on what lane  
6 they're traveling in on the roadway and that's  
7 part of the evaluation to see whether they do  
8 notice the countdown signal and what their  
9 behavior might be when they do recognize that the  
10 countdown is counting to 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, and to see  
11 what their behavior is.  
12

13 So there are some motorists still  
14 able to see. They're still able to see the  
15 countdown occurring. It is more directed towards  
16 the pedestrians but there is some ability of the  
17 motorists to observe it as well, just like they  
18 can see the flashing walk or don't walk signal now  
19 when they're traveling.

20 CHAIRPERSON LIU: All right. And  
21 then back to Deputy Commissioner Woloch's  
22 comments, you highlighted a number of actions that  
23 the DOT has taken with respect to the construction  
24 of curbs as well as changes in the signal timing.  
25 For quite a long time now there has been talk of

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the DOT acquiring the capability to change the  
signal timing at different times of the day.

So for example during rush hours,  
the signals would be timed a certain way and in  
the middle of the daytime where it also happens  
that more seniors are walking around that the  
signal timing could actually be changed during  
those times of the day. Is that something that we  
have the capability for or is that still in the  
works?

COMMISSIONER WOLOCH: We utilize  
what's called Advanced Traffic Control devices to  
be able to program the signal to operate  
differently during different times of the day and  
different days of the week and every different day  
of the month and the year. So we do have the  
capability to upgrade the controller to this  
Advanced Traffic Control device and provide that  
operation where it does make sense.

CHAIRPERSON LIU: Okay. Is that  
capability now available everywhere in the City?

COMMISSIONER WOLOCH: No. We can't  
do it everywhere, it's very, very, very expensive,  
but where it's needed we can indeed do it.

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CHAIRPERSON LIU: So is it just a  
budget issue?

COMMISSIONER WOLOCH: Well in many  
locations it's not really necessary and if we can  
use the standard controller that would cycle the  
same during the day. We also have the capability  
of hooking up our signals to our computers and  
they can generate the signal timing plan.

So it's a budget issue to the sense  
that if special timing is not necessary at a  
location we'll use the standard controller but if  
there is a need to have some special timing such  
as the conditions that you are suggesting, then we  
can put in the more advanced controller and  
provide that split second adjustment that we could  
change the timing during the day as necessary.

CHAIRPERSON LIU: Okay. I mean it  
doesn't have to be split second. We're talking  
about things that are programmed in advance. So  
for example on Monday through Fridays during the  
rush hour, the morning and evening rush hours, the  
major vehicular corridors would have more time to  
allow traffic to pass but that means less time for  
pedestrians trying to cross those major

thoroughfares.

Whereas in the middle of the day,  
we could probably afford to have less time allow  
vehicles to travel along those major corridors and  
more time for people, particularly senior  
citizens, trying to cross those major  
thoroughfares.

COMMISSIONER WOLOCH: No, that,  
indeed, makes a lot sense, as for example we did  
that on Queen's Boulevard and elsewhere, where we  
have the traffic signal timing to provide for the  
movement of motor vehicles during the morning and  
evening peak periods to accommodate that movement  
primarily. And then in the midday we added a  
considerable amount of time for pedestrians to  
cross that very wide boulevard.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO:  
We've just been told that the Land Use Committee,  
any members need to go across the street 'cause  
there's a vote that is waiting. Sorry.

CHAIRPERSON LIU: Okay. And so  
really, really major thoroughfares like Queens  
Boulevard now have that capability.

COMMISSIONER WOLOCH: Correct.



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CHAIRPERSON LIU: But what about other major thoroughfares that are certainly not as large as something like Queens Boulevard and yet there are many seniors living along these major roads where it would make sense. Is there analysis that the DOT takes up proactively or does the DOT wait for some kind of feedback from the community to alert the DOT that maybe that kind of capability is needed in that particular area?

COMMISSIONER WOLOCH: Well we do respond to requests from the community of course when there is an indication that people are having difficulty crossing the street at various times of the day. And we would make adjustments according. And then we--

CHAIRPERSON LIU: [Interposing]  
Adjustments in terms of changing the signal automatically, changing the signal time automatically at different hours of the day.

COMMISSIONER WOLOCH: That's within our capabilities yes, in many locations.

CHAIRPERSON LIU: That--wait. I'm just trying to get, you know, I'm just trying to see how--is this capability still very limited to

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2 certain locations in the City or is it widely  
3 available--

4 COMMISSIONER WOLOCH: [Interposing]  
5 Well it's--

6 CHAIRPERSON LIU: --in the City?

7 COMMISSIONER WOLOCH: It's not  
8 universal yet but as we install these Advanced  
9 Traffic Controller--

10 CHAIRPERSON LIU: [Interposing] Is  
11 it available in 10% of the City or 75% of the  
12 City--?

13 COMMISSIONER WOLOCH: [Interposing]  
14 Well I'd have to get back to you on that as far as  
15 the number--

16 CHAIRPERSON LIU: [Interposing]  
17 Well no, no, come one. 10% of the City or 75%--?

18 COMMISSIONER WOLOCH: [Interposing]  
19 Well we have--

20 CHAIRPERSON LIU: [Interposing] I'm  
21 not even asking for, you know, this has been an  
22 issue that's been going on, right?

23 COMMISSIONER WOLOCH: Council  
24 Member we'll get you the list. As you know we've  
25 been--this universe, whatever that number is and

1  
2 my guess is it's somewhere in between, we've been  
3 expanding that universe. So every year we've been  
4 putting in place more and more of the Advanced  
5 Traffic Controllers.

6 CHAIRPERSON LIU: Oh.

7 COMMISSIONER WOLOCH: So we'll get  
8 you the exact list for where we're at now.

9 CHAIRPERSON LIU: Okay. I mean,  
10 again, I think I want to emphasize that it's great  
11 that the DOT along with the Department for the  
12 Aging has implemented many of these changes. Many  
13 of these changes will enhance the safety of  
14 pedestrians all across the City and especially  
15 pedestrians who happen to be senior citizens. The  
16 signal timing issue is still a big issue that's  
17 been out there.

18 It's been long delayed. It's long  
19 overdue and I'm getting a sense that the DOT is  
20 still not to the point where it should be in terms  
21 of being--because, you know, you talk about having  
22 the capability to change the signal timing during  
23 the middle of the day, having computers run that  
24 signal timing.

25 And yet I'm just trying to get a

sense as to, you know, is this now pretty much available in most of the City or is it still limited, extremely limited, to certain areas of the City. And I'm not, you know, I'm not asking for specific percentage but, you know, is it available just in Manhattan but not really in Queens and Brooklyn? Is, you know, I'm trying to get a sense of that. And I'm sure you've got to have a sense of that.

COMMISSIONER WOLOCH: Well we have over--

CHAIRPERSON LIU: [Interposing]  
Because it's long overdue. This has been an issue that we've been talking about.

COMMISSIONER WOLOCH: Well we have over 12,000 intersections that are signalized. We anticipate within 4 years having all of those intersections with the new traffic controllers. And we're phasing them in; I would guess about 50% now have it. The critical locations, the ones that went in first, but sometimes it's not always that critical.

Some intersections operate in a very standard, normal pattern, day in and day out.

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2	There's no special reason to have a special timing	
3	plan for those intersections. But others, as you	
4	suggest, do require some special attention,	
5	special signal timing plans and those are the ones	
6	that have priority to have the capability there to	
7	change the signal timing by time of day or day of	
8	the week or whatever, whatever special plan you	
9	think is appropriate.	
10	CHAIRPERSON LIU: Okay. So the	
11	50%, roughly--	
12	COMMISSIONER WOLOCH: [Interposing]	
13	Roughly, yes.	
14	CHAIRPERSON LIU: --extremely	
15	roughly.	
16	COMMISSIONER WOLOCH: Yes.	
17	CHAIRPERSON LIU: 50% that you talk	
18	about, those would be intersections where the	
19	signals can be controlled by the central computer?	
20	COMMISSIONER WOLOCH: Well some of	
21	they by the central computer--most of them by the	
22	central computer and/or at the intersection itself	
23	where the controller can be programmed by our--	
24	CHAIRPERSON LIU: [Interposing]	
25	Okay.	

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COMMISSIONER WOLOCH: --timing  
people and can set the timing for that  
intersection.

CHAIRPERSON LIU: Got it.

COMMISSIONER WOLOCH: and--

CHAIRPERSON LIU: [Interposing] So  
that the timing can be different for say 7:00 to  
9:00 A.M. as opposed to 10:00 to 2:00 P.M.

COMMISSIONER WOLOCH: Absolutely.

CHAIRPERSON LIU: Okay.

MR. SOFFIAN: And Councilman I  
think what's important is, I mean you've honed in  
on one very important tool that's at our disposal  
that we can, particularly as we get more corridors  
instrumented with the Advanced Traffic Controllers  
that we can begin to use more of that. It's one,  
I think, of a number of tools that are available  
to us in terms of improving signals.

So a big part of what's gone on in  
the 6 neighborhoods and will continue in the rest  
of the 25 neighborhoods are localized timing  
improvements where we're adding on more time, at  
all times of the day.

Another tool in the toolbox,

mentioned in the testimony, is leading pedestrian intervals, giving folks a head start before the turning vehicles come. So I think you've correctly identified one of the tools that are available to us. I think collectively there's a lot more that we can do and that we've begun to do with traffic signals.

CHAIRPERSON LIU: All right. I'll turn it over to my Co-Chair Council Member Melissa Mark-Viverito.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO:  
Thank you Mr. Chair. Thank you for your testimony and I think I just want to add on a little bit to what the Chair was talking about. You talk about this toolbox of all these different items, I guess, that could be implemented or tools that could be implemented. Is there kind of, when you've identified these areas of concern, is there a minimum package so to speak that you do? I mean or do you do all of these things? Or is there a minimum of those items that you would implement in that area?

Is it based on cost? I mean what does it cost to implement something fully like

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this in a designated area or an identified area?

COMMISSIONER WOLOCH: Yeah I mean I  
think the cost is less the concern here--

ACTING CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO:  
[Interposing] The concern.

COMMISSIONER WOLOCH: --because a  
lot of the improvements we're talking about are  
not necessarily high cost items. I think the  
piece that's more expensive is the capital  
improvements but in terms of the signal timing  
adjustments and the signage and the markings,  
those are much, much less expensive. So I think  
what's driving our assessment for these areas is  
less the cost and more the need.

And I think in every single one  
there's going to be some markings improvement and  
marking upgrades. There's going to be some signal  
timing improvement. In every single one so far  
there's been some traffic calming by building  
medians or neck-downs. But I think the specifics  
of each one are going to vary and really depend on  
the conditions in that neighborhood--

ACTING CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO:  
[Interposing] Do you have examples in those slides



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2 of all of these items, what they look like? What  
3 it's--

4 COMMISSIONER WOLOCH: [Interposing]  
5 Yeah. Let's see here. So here's an example.  
6 It's a little faded but you can see the median--

7 ACTING CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO:  
8 [Interposing] Right.

9 COMMISSIONER WOLOCH: --that's the  
10 refuge island that's been installed at the  
11 intersection which is going to do a couple of  
12 things. We'll just go back to it. It's going to--  
13 -it's effectively narrowing the roadway. To the  
14 motorists they're seeing less open space, they're  
15 going to drive more slowly. And it's also  
16 providing a refuge area for somebody who's  
17 crossing who may have gotten a late start.

18 ACTING CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO:  
19 Okay.

20 [Pause]

21 COMMISSIONER WOLOCH: And that's a  
22 similar improvement.

23 ACTING CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO:  
24 What's the different in that one? Oh the median  
25 again, I'm sorry--

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COMMISSIONER WOLOCH: [Interposing]

Right. Yeah I mean the signal timing improvements I think don't really lend themselves to being shown in a slide. You're not really going to see it. So I think most of these pictures are showing these physical--where we're physically building something to calm traffic.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO:

so that's the biggest visual one there. Now when you talk about--you talked about in your testimony about the improvements to date and six SPFAs. And then you cite about how the figures in terms of injuries has decreased. What period of time are you looking at? Like when did you start implementing this measures--

COMMISSIONER WOLOCH: [Interposing]

Um-hum.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO:

--in these six areas--

COMMISSIONER WOLOCH: [Interposing]

And--

ACTING CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO:

--and what is the period of time that you're looking at when you're looking at that analysis?

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COMMISSIONER WOLOCH: We started to do the work in these three areas where we provide the statistics in 2008. So this is, I think we're looking at crash data from 2007 for the before and then 2009--

MS. ANN MARIE DOUGHERTY:

[Interposing] We average--we average--

COMMISSIONER WOLOCH: --for the after.

MS. DOUGHERTY: We averaged six years before for the same before period and then [no sound] to the after period.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO:

And you're looking at like what eight months, I guess, 'cause 2008, you know--okay--

MS. DOUGHERTY: [Interposing] It depends. The earliest one we implemented was Brighton Beach so we may have over a year.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO:

Okay. And then just last question 'cause I like this--you talk about the Safety Education Program that is available not just to the areas that you have identified but maybe to senior centers--

COMMISSIONER WOLOCH: [Interposing]

Um-hum.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO:

--in other locations as well. Because I don't think I've heard of that. So how--what exactly, you know, what would it be comprised of, that education, in areas where it's not been identified as a high area--

COMMISSIONER WOLOCH: [Interposing]

Sure.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO:

--where you haven't implemented these measures. What's--

COMMISSIONER WOLOCH: [Interposing]

The--

ACTING CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO:

--the education program--

COMMISSIONER WOLOCH: [Interposing]

Yeah I mean it's a very similar, very similar program. I guess the one thing that we're doing here that's not necessarily a part of our regular safety education efforts when we go to senior centers is we're particularly focusing on the changes that are happening in these neighborhoods and relating the traffic safety lessons and

guidance to the changes that are happening on the ground.

But as you said, we do our work in senior centers around the City, not just in the areas. We work closely with the Department for the Aging and the idea is to get older adults to think about the kinds of things that can contribute to their wellbeing. So being conspicuous, looking at the environment around them, being particularly aware of turning vehicles which are a particularly acute part of the part of the problem here. And it's not that dissimilar.

There's, I think, a lot of overlap between the kind of work we do with older adults and the kind of work we do with children at schools. These are sort of very basic traffic safety lessons. And we've had a great partnership with DFTA over the years working with senior centers around the City And if you have some in your District that you'd like us to come to, we'd be happy to work with you.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO:

And then just quickly that, you know, obviously this has been identified as an area in the age-

friendly framework. It's considered a priority. There have been many other task forces that the Administration has put forth and recommendations that have been made.

So in light of the budget realities as we move forward, in light of the fact that agencies have had to make cuts and delayed projects, do you see this program continuing to be a priority that's not going to suffer an impact, you know, a cutback? Or I mean what's your-- what's it looking like for the next Fiscal Year?

COMMISSIONER WOLOCH: Yeah I mean look, I think that's a good question. This program is very important to us. I think it's one we want to protect. We have a few things going for us. One is that we do get a significant amount of non-City funding to support our education programs, particularly from the State and that hasn't--there's no sign that that's going to be cut.

Obviously that's something we have to keep an eye on. And we get a lot of bang for the buck. So, you know, one safety educator from our department can accomplish a lot of work. The

other piece of this which I think will increasingly become important is working with other partners to help do this work. So we're part of--

ACTING CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO:

[Interposing] Reso-A money.

COMMISSIONER WOLOCH: Well there's that--

ACTING CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO:

[Interposing] I get it.

COMMISSIONER WOLOCH: --on the capital side but also just in terms of doing some of the education work that we do. I think it's happening a little more on the school side in terms of working with the Department of Education, in the Safe Kids Coalition, but I think also on the older adult side, I think that's a direction we can begin to sort of train the trainers. So not just work with the older adults in the senior center--

ACTING CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO:

[Interposing] Right.

COMMISSIONER WOLOCH: --but the directors of senior centers to give them the tools

they need to reinforce the messages that we're coming out with.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO:

Well thank you. I'm going to move onto my other colleagues and I know we've been joined by Council Member Jessica Lappin. Council Member Vacca.

COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: Yes. [No sound] Oh now it's on, okay. Well thank you again. I thank you very much for your presentation but I have to tell you I always envisioned that we would take a look at senior centers the way we do at schools. When you have a school you usually have signs up: school crossing, children crossing.

Now many people do not realize we have senior centers where we have senior centers. They're not as visible as schools. They're not as big as schools. Yet when seniors leave the center, two things I'm looking for, number one is signage to alert a motorist that there is a senior center there. And then to replicate something that I think has been pretty successful, DOE or even before them, the old Department of Education, the old Board of Ed, they had something called



Safe Corridor Programs. Now many of our high schools usually have a Safe Corridor Program. They realize that the children when they leave the high school walk to a train, walk to a bus, and much of that coordination involves DOE, Police Department.

And maybe we're not looking to replicate exactly that model, but I'm looking to interest you in having a model where we have signage at senior centers. Then we look at the senior center and we say to ourselves, where do the seniors go when they leave? All right Are they walking down Bruckner Boulevard to the Number 40 bus? Is there adequate crosswalks? Is there the handicapped ramp accessibility? Are there visible stop signs where maybe trees could be covering them?

Now what I'm looking for is something similar to that to make sure that from a traffic point of view, our seniors have crossings where we have maximized the safety and the public notification that we have a senior center. So let's start with that. What's your reaction to that?

COMMISSIONER WOLOCH: Two different issues that I think you're raising within that suggestion. And I think they're both good ones. In terms of the signage I think that the challenge for us is that there are 1.4 million signs in the City, so there's already a lot of sign clutter. So I think the question becomes are those signs that are just going to be lost among all the other signage or ones that can add value. And I think it's something, you know, we're happy to think about and talk more about.

The, I think the other issue of honing on these specific corridors that are near the centers and that are used by the older adults at the centers, to make the safety improvements, is, I guess, a question of how do we think about where we should be focusing our work. So we had a particular methodology for identifying these first 25 areas that had a different approach that focused on the accidents.

My guess is there'd be a lot of overlap. As we move forward with this program, you know, it's going to grow. We're going to learn from it. We're going to build on it. After

1 these 25 areas are done and we think about where  
2 else should we be doing work, I think it's a fair  
3 question, what's the best way to come up with  
4 where we should focus.  
5

6 And maybe we conclude that the  
7 formula we used the first time is the right one.  
8 Maybe it's something we have to revisit and think  
9 about other factors. But I think it's definitely  
10 a question that we're going to want to revisit.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: You see, my  
12 suggestion is less capitally intensive. I'm not  
13 proposing a large investment of capital money.  
14 When you establish a safe corridor for seniors and  
15 you identify that safe corridor, seniors that may  
16 go off in another direction will be encouraged or  
17 can be encouraged through an education program to  
18 take this route.

19 Here we have made those adjustments  
20 for you and maybe one block out of your way but,  
21 you know, your safety is here. That's what DOE  
22 and the Police Department have done with safe  
23 corridor for the high school students. They're  
24 encouraged to go with their friends on a certain  
25 route because there is police presence, there is

adequate lighting, there is an overpass to take you so you don't have to cross a bad thoroughfare. There's a criteria. And I think the same criteria can be applied.

I know what you're saying about signage. I know that the City of New York, for example, they don't make those dog pooper signs anymore. They don't make the children at play signs anymore. People want these signs and they can't get them. So I know we have a sign issue in the City and I know part of it is financial. But you think of seniors today, many senior centers are in public housing facilities.

When they leave public housing, they walk through a development to go back to their homes. Many of the paths, for example, in public housing are full of potholes and they're not prepared. I mean we have benches next to senior centers in public housing developments that seniors cannot sit on. I'm thinking of a center-based approach that really would have to be center by center.

But it would have to be a collaborative effort involving NYCHA, involving

DOT, involving other agencies and Community Boards and the Council. So that's my suggestion. I think we can do that and I don't think it's money-intensive.

The other thing I wanted to mention to you, we have to involve the Police Department. One of the biggest complaints I get anywhere I go is the way people are driving their cars, the speed with which people drive their vehicles. Now every time I go someplace people want a speed bump. Everybody wants a speed bump on their block. Many of these people are seniors who are saying to me, Jimmy; you should see how the cars come down my block.

You should see how the people do not obey stop signs and red lights. I see it all the time. People go through stop signs and red lights. So there's got to be an enforcement mechanism, especially once we identify the senior locations that are most vulnerable. There's got to be an enforcement mechanism to get people to understand. Because senior-friendly means pedestrian-friendly but I know we're looking for a certain audience.

So I bring both of these suggestions to your attention and I'd like your help--

COMMISSIONER WOLOCH: [Interposing]  
Yeah, look, they're great suggestions. Just jumping back to the first situation, I think it's something that we should talk more about and we should give some more thought to. I think it's a good suggestion.

In terms of the second issue which is really sort of the fundamental challenge, I think, for us and for the traffic enforcement folks at the Police Department, I think part of the issue is that there's only so many places the Police Department can be. They can never be in as many places as we want them for enforcement.

We, if we're really going to reach the kind of traffic enforcement levels that we need to have, we have to supplement the Police Department with more red light cameras and potentially cameras for other uses including speed cameras. And as we've talked about before we need the approval from Albany, the Council's been very helpful in past years on the red light camera

front. As we move and move in the years to come  
want to turn to that kind of enforcement as a  
tool, we're going to need your help--

COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA:

[Interposing] Well I support that. I hope you  
take my suggestions seriously. The last thing I  
will say and then I will end, I'm sorry for taking  
up so much time, when I mentioned a public housing  
development, and I mentioned the curb cuts, and I  
mentioned seniors walking through paths that are  
full of potholes, etcetera, understand the main  
danger to a senior today is the fall.

That's the problem. I know traffic  
safety is important and that also results in falls  
but when a fall happens to an elderly person it  
triggers so many other variables because of their  
age. So I'm concerned with these issues that  
maybe none of us have thought of but that is a  
senior safety issue that seniors are enduring  
every day. So. I thank you.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO:

Thank you Council Member and Council Member  
Brewer.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you

1 very much. I have a couple of questions. First  
2 of all, I know you talked about the signals that  
3 would be countdown and you know that we also--  
4 we've got a hearing on this with the audible  
5 signals which are more expensive.  
6

7 Is that something that you have  
8 thought of? Because there are many seniors who  
9 are blind, visually handicapped, particularly  
10 around places where there is a large institution  
11 that is doing a great job working with them. So  
12 what's the status of the audibles?

13 COMMISSIONER WOLOCH: At  
14 institutions we're very pleased to provide the  
15 audible accessible signals. We have them in many  
16 locations now. When it comes to our attention,  
17 where there's an institution with a large  
18 population of visually impaired individuals we do  
19 provide those audible accessible signals.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Well then  
21 we never got them on West 65<sup>th</sup> Street at Jewish  
22 Guild for the Blind, so we can have a further  
23 conversation--

24 COMMISSIONER WOLOCH: [Interposing]  
25 I think we certainly can and sure, yes--



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COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER:

[Interposing] Okay. Second issue is, we on the West Side have many people who use pedestrian opportunities. I was talking to my colleagues in Staten Island; they don't know how to walk 'cause they drive everywhere. But on the West Side we know how to walk. And so my question is how do you deal not only with the slowing down, which the Chair mentioned which is a great idea, but also how do you deal with the bicycles on the street?

Is it making a difference where you have secure bike lanes where the bicycles are staying in the street and not going on the sidewalk or going the opposite direction? 'Cause that is, if you go to a forum on any topic in the world regarding seniors, it could be world affairs and the number one issue is the bicycles on the sidewalk.

COMMISSIONER WOLOCH: Yeah. I mean there's been no question that over the past few years there's been a dramatic proliferation in the number of people cycling in the City which--

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER:

[Interposing] Yeah, going the wrong way sometimes.

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3 COMMISSIONER WOLOCH: --is a great  
4 thing.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Yes.

6 COMMISSIONER WOLOCH: The bike  
7 lanes that we're providing are being heavily used.  
8 But there's also no question that as you have  
9 many, many more cyclists out there that there's  
10 certainly going to be more cyclists also doing  
11 things they shouldn't be doing. And it's  
12 something that we're beginning to focus on in ways  
13 that we hadn't previously.

14 So last year we launched our Look  
15 advertising campaign which was aimed at getting  
16 drivers to be more aware of cyclists and getting  
17 cyclists to be more aware of their  
18 responsibilities. And it's, you know, as the City  
19 grows, as our streets get more and more dense, as  
20 there's more and more people cycling, as there are  
21 more people walking, as there are more older  
22 adults walking, that density and that competition  
23 for space and the potential dangers are just going  
24 to grow.

25 And so it's all the more important  
that we're doing the kind of traffic calming work

1 we're talking about and providing things like bike  
2 lanes but also doing this education work. So we  
3 talked earlier about doing education outreach at  
4 senior centers which is one piece of it but this  
5 larger outreach and communication aimed at  
6 everybody, you know, people who you're not going  
7 to be able to reach 'cause they're not in school,  
8 they're not an older adult but they're out there  
9 driving their car. We have to do more to try to  
10 reach those folks through advertising and the same  
11 with the cyclists.  
12

13 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I would  
14 just like to suggest, and I don't think it's just  
15 Manhattan, but we have pedestrian-heavy  
16 communities that you have a much more concentrated  
17 Police Department, DFTA, DOT, transportation  
18 alternatives, business community, maybe held in  
19 conjunction with the BIDs, I don't know. But you  
20 really, the number one issue are the seniors and  
21 the bicycles.

22 Now I'm a big bicycle fan,  
23 everybody knows that. But you have--this is a  
24 fear that is unprecedented in these communities.  
25 The police are giving where they can. We have

been to all the restaurants. We have been with the police; we've been on our own. We've done as much education as we can possibly do. We have sign laws. We have helmet laws. We have light laws.

It's not working. They are still bicycling the wrong way without all the appropriate materials. So I don't want to belabor the point, I'm just saying please, please, please, while we're thinking of these other good ideas, the groundwork needs to be done extensively if the seniors are going to be able--not just to get from the senior center, they--if a bicycle's coming, all signs and speed bumps don't matter. So I'm really saying please, please, please think more intently on that issue.

In terms of the pedestrian signals, are you bouncing off NYC Win? How are you doing the computerization or the technology regarding the signals?

MR. SOFFIAN: Yes Council Member,  
we are shifting over from our--through our  
computerized signals, we're shifting now from the  
Verizon landlines to NYC Win. It saves us money

and it improves the reliance and usefulness of our signals, our computerized signals, by using NYC Win. So we are--

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER:

[Interposing] So how--

MR. SOFFIAN: --taking full advantage of it.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I don't want to sound too much like the brilliant Mr. Liu but how many signals are actually switched over, NYC Win, you know, those kinds of Liu questions.

COMMISSIONER WOLOCH: Again I think testified--I got back to you with those statistics.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: All right. We'd really appreciate that 'cause that is obviously something that's of interest on many levels.

Finally curb cuts, seniors need curb cuts, we all need curb cuts, strollers need curb cuts, Fresh Direct needs curb cuts, everybody needs curb cuts, so my question is my understanding is they only get either built or upgraded when there's a new road being built.

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Meanwhile they disintegrate. So it's a cost factor. Is there some capital money that can do more extensive work in pedestrian-heavy areas to repair and maintain the curb cuts? Make Fresh Direct pay for it all.

COMMISSIONER WOLOCH: Well that's a good idea. As you know over the past few years we've been in the process of focusing on installing curb cuts where they don't exist--

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER:  
[Interposing] I know that part.

COMMISSIONER WOLOCH: --so that's been the first-

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER:  
[Interposing] We got them all they just get out of balance.

COMMISSIONER WOLOCH: Well not quite, so we've gotten a lot done. There's a universe of locations that are, I forget the term we use, but they're difficult--it's difficult to implement curb cuts. So there's some places where we can just come in and do the work, other places-  
-

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER:

[Interposing] 86<sup>th</sup> and Broadway, I know.

COMMISSIONER WOLOCH: --where there's vaults and catch basins and subways and other complicated issues that makes the work for our regular contract something that can't be done as part of that bucket. And that's where we are now. We're starting to turn to those difficult locations. So there's still a universe of those out there.

As part of this program for the senior areas we've been upgrading curbs in some instances where it's necessary. And this does get back to, I think, what Council Member Vacca was suggesting--

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER:  
[Interposing] Yes.

COMMISSIONER WOLOCH: --that there are places, routes from senior centers that are in need. I imagine there would be some overlap with the corridors we're focusing on in these high accident areas. But I think however you approach it there's no question that there are locations that need this kind of work where there's senior activity.

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COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: All right.

Thank you. Northeast corner, 86<sup>th</sup> and Broadway  
needs one of those special--

COMMISSIONER WOLOCH: [Interposing]  
I need the local--yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: --thank you  
very much Mr. Chair.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO:  
Thank you Council Member. Council Member Koppell.

COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL: Thank you  
very much. First of all, and I'm not just saying  
this to you, I would appreciate and I think the  
members would appreciate it when you have these  
PowerPoints that you bring copies, hard copies.  
They're--

COMMISSIONER WOLOCH: [Interposing]  
sure.

COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL: --easier  
to read and also it's nice to take them back to  
the office to show to staff or to have them on  
file. Oh you have them so it would be good to  
give them out when you have them [chuckling]--

COMMISSIONER WOLOCH: [Interposing]  
Thank you. Good suggestion.



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COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL: It doesn't  
do much good if they're in your pocket. Thanks.  
With respect--I'm interested to hear about the  
installation of these remote timing devices; Mr.  
Woloch knows one of the reasons that I'm  
interested. But are they--I mean can one make a  
request that one of these remote timing devices be  
installed at a particular light?

MR. SOFFIAN: The need for these  
advanced traffic controllers, depending on the  
signal operation at the location. If the  
intersection works well with a conventional  
controller then there's less urgency to do so--

COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL:  
[Interposing] No but I mean whereas someone might,  
whether the community or the Council Person might  
think it would be useful, can one request it?

MR. SOFFIAN: Well I think first we  
look at the signal timing that currently exists  
and see if it's--

COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL:  
[Interposing] No obviously, obviously, but what  
I'm asking is can these be installed on a one by  
one basis?

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MR. SOFFIAN: We're usually doing it on a corridor basis or on a whole community-wide basis. It's not isolated intersections by intersections, that's not typically how we do this. We like to see, if you have a location that you think would benefit from a more sophisticated signal timing plan then we would be happy to take a look at that.

COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL: Similarly the countdown devices, one of the things that I would suggest is that not only you consult with Council Members but perhaps do a formal process of requests or suggestions, suggested that the Community Boards study this and get back to you where they think it would be useful.

As some of you may know, you recently in the last year or so did a study, I guess, with Sanitation, requesting where the alternate side of the street parking could be reduced from two days to one day. And that was done in part of my District and everybody's very happy about it.

And I think that here again you've heard from several of my colleagues that people

1  
2 feel that certain signals need to have more time  
3 for pedestrians.

4 That's a chronic issue as I think  
5 Gale Brewer mentioned it. People come to me all  
6 the time and there area certain intersections  
7 where the seniors go shopping and they're  
8 constantly complaining well they don't have enough  
9 time to get across. And we have written to you  
10 and sometimes we've gotten a positive response and  
11 changed the timing.

12 But I think if you would do a  
13 survey of the Community Boards, all of the  
14 Community Boards in the City, and say, you know,  
15 where would you suggest a remote signal connection  
16 so that you could change the timing as was  
17 suggested by the Chairman. And where would you  
18 suggest a countdown device? And where would you  
19 suggest an audible? We've got one audible signal  
20 near a senior center in Riverdale and that was  
21 welcomed.

22 So I would suggest that you do a  
23 citywide survey. I mean obviously you're not  
24 going to be able to do everything you're asked to  
25 do but at least that would be a way of getting

some public input. And I think that's a very good function for the Community Boards as well as Councilmen.

COMMISSIONER WOLOCH: I think--look that's a good suggestion and I think you sort of honed in on what becomes the fundamental challenge for us which is there are lots of locations where we could identify potential improvements. And the question becomes trying to focus what's a limited amount of resources where the need is greatest. But the point about community consultation is a good one and an important one.

And as the seniors program is something we can continue on over the next couple of years with this round of neighborhoods, one of the things we're doing now for this next group of ten is to start the process by going to the Community Boards and we're saying hey, we're coming to this neighborhood.

Here's the kind of work we've done in other communities. Here's our toolbox. Tell us about what you think the problem areas are. So we're basically doing what you're suggesting for these areas. Now you're, I think, making a

broader suggestion.

I think the challenge for us becomes, you know, what's our capacity to get work done. So between the Safe Routes for Schools Program which is on a similar track, between this work, some of the other programs we have, we're, I think, pushing the envelope as far as we can. But it's a good suggestion and I think it's something we should think about.

COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL: Make one more suggestion in terms of rationing. We all feel, I know the Council often speaks about fairness to particular neighborhoods. So you could say well if you can do, for instance, the signaling devices on a signal by signal basis, assuming you can, you could say okay we have, I don't know what it is, is it--how many Community Boards do we have about 30? 30 Community Boards?

[Off mic]: 59.

COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL: How many? 59. I'm sorry, I got the wrong number. 59 Community Boards. You could say all right we can do X number this year. So we'll ask each Community Board to give us 5 suggestions, no more,

or 10, or give us a priority, 1 through 10 and we'll try to do each Community Board within the next year or 2.

And we'll look at their priorities. We don't have enough money to do 10; we'll only do whatever number, 1 or 2 in each Community Board. And you can vary that obviously. You can say well one Community Board's indicated that there are 3 really, really important places we have to do and another Community Board, yes they gave us 10 suggestions but none of them seem all that important. I mean you have a certain amount of discretion. But if you get a list by priority, you can prioritize your expenditure and limit it to whatever monies you have. That's all [chuckling].

CHAIRPERSON LIU: All right. Thank you very much Council Member Koppell. Questions from Council Member Reyna.

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: Thank you--

COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL:

[Interposing] Just may I interrupt. You didn't call my name. I don't know if that's important. I know they do it all the time but--

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CHAIRPERSON LIU: [Interposing]

Council Member Oliver Koppell--

COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL: --I want  
to make sure I'm here.

CHAIRPERSON LIU: --from the Bronx  
is in the house. He just concluded his  
questioning of these DOT and DFTA officials--

COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL:  
[Interposing] Okay [laughing]

CHAIRPERSON LIU: --thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: Thank you  
Chairs. I just wanted to commend the work that is  
being focused in on today because on election day  
I had a senior come up to me and said I'm so very  
happy with your work Council Member but you have  
to do something about the lack of time I have with  
her walker, showing me, this is her companion, and  
she doesn't have enough time.

So I asked her where exactly, let's  
focus in on the problem so we can help you. She  
said everywhere. The City of New York. And I  
laughed, thinking, you know, gosh I can't fix the  
City of New York. I wish there was a more narrow  
focus but obviously we are already dealing with a

pilot program and expecting to expand this.

And I understand that you have a phase one and a phase two budgeted but we are also seeing a budget crisis. And so I want to understand the issues concerning the budget cuts and will the program be in jeopardy because of those cuts or do you foresee moving forward on phase one and phase two without any doubts. Phase three perhaps may be lesser areas or none at all.

COMMISSIONER WOLOCH: I think the work in the 25 neighborhoods is not in jeopardy at all. We're going to go through this initial pilot program. I think the two questions then become in terms of the capital, potential capital projects that come out of these studies, where is the funding going to come from. And we've already gotten a commitment from a number of the State Senators in Albany to earmark some of their funding for safe schools projects, for capital projects around schools.

We're hoping to continue to work with the Council, work with Washington, work with Albany, to get similar capital funding for the work coming out of these studies. But the basic



1 program, the work we can do in-house, the signal  
2 timing work, all the other non-capital tools,  
3 we're going to be able to get that done for the 25  
4 areas.  
5

6 What happens after that I think is  
7 something that is, you know, we're going to have  
8 to see. I mean our intent is to build upon this  
9 program, learn from this program. Hopefully the  
10 success of this program can help us get more money  
11 from Washington and from Albany. And we'll be  
12 able to continue to go to other areas around the  
13 City.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: Absolutely.  
15 And the phase two that you have on your last sheet  
16 of the presentation--

17 COMMISSIONER WOLOCH: [Interposing]  
18 Um-hum.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: --is going  
20 to be in effect for budget year 2011? Or is it  
21 currently funded already?

22 MS. DOUGHERTY: [Going on and off  
23 mic] The studies will begin, [Off mic] the  
24 remaining ten, and we secured Federal [off mic]  
25 capital [off mic] where we'll be [off mic] these

concrete treatments.

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: I'm sorry.

MS. DOUGHERTY: Okay. The remaining ten areas will be--studies will be conducted by our consultants beginning in January. We anticipate they will be completed in approximately a year, a year and a half. And then the treatments will be implemented. We have secured Federal funding for a lot of these improvements so some of these improvements will be implemented in-house with some of the concrete improvements well. And then some will go to capital depending on what could be built in-house.

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: Okay--

COMMISSIONER WOLOCH: [Interposing]  
And just to be clear, so that's phase three.

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: Um-hum.

COMMISSIONER WOLOCH: That Ann was referencing--

MS. DOUGHERTY: [Interposing] I guess you would call it--

COMMISSIONER WOLOCH: [Interposing]  
Right, the last of the 25 areas. So with this--  
this program for the 25 areas is well on its way.

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COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: And so 2008  
pilot areas in blue are completed.

COMMISSIONER WOLOCH: Um-hum.

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: Phase one  
areas in green are in effect now.

MS. DOUGHERTY: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: And phase  
two in red will begin studies in January.

MS. DOUGHERTY: Correct.

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: And as far  
as the areas and the suggestions that we may have  
as far as how do you, moving forward, identify  
areas that are necessary and perhaps the formula  
you used it may not be the best or can be  
improved, have you considered the NORC areas, the  
Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities?

And I say this because the senior  
who came up to me lives in a NORC area although  
it's not identified as such because it's a  
competitive process to be labeled as a NORC and  
not everyone has the means or capacity to apply  
for such funding and categorical ability.

So that the Mitchell Lama Lindsay  
Park is a community that is aging in place,

therefore would be a perfect identified area for this type of program. And I don't know if you're using the statistics of NORCs that already in the Council we've identified communities where there's this high concentration. These are easier because they're high density.

In a lower density area such as Ridgewood in my District, it would be considered a NORC, bless you. And so I just wanted to understand, you know, is that one of the criteria that you can use moving forward--

COMMISSIONER WOLOCH: [Interposing]  
Right.

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: --and can it be applied for your phase two which is starting in January.

COMMISSIONER WOLOCH: Right. The-- you're not the first person to make that suggestion and, you know, there are a lot of different ways that you could potentially approach identifying these areas. What we did for these first 25 was we focused on the actual accident data.

Now if you were to look at the, you

1 know, where these areas are and the accident data,  
2 where there are high concentrations of accidents  
3 involving older adults, if you were to match that  
4 against the density, the population density of  
5 older adults, there's a lot of correlation. You'd  
6 come up with a lot of the same places, not  
7 necessarily the exact same universe but it's a lot  
8 of the same neighborhoods. So there's a lot of  
9 NORCs in and around the 25 areas that we've  
10 identified.  
11

12 And for this group of 25 including  
13 the 1, this last group of 10 where we're beginning  
14 the studies, that's been determined already.  
15 That's how we came up with the 25. As we move  
16 forward in the years to come, I think we need to  
17 take a step back and think about what's the best  
18 way. Did the accident data approach, did that  
19 work out well? Is that something that we maybe  
20 need to look at the accidents in conjunction with  
21 population?

22 Do we need, going back to  
23 Councilman Vacca's suggestion; do we need to focus  
24 in particular on where the centers are? And I  
25 think that's a big question for us and something

1  
2 that'll be over the next few years something for  
3 us to talk about.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: And I was  
5 just noticing your maps as far as the Greenpoint  
6 section in North Brooklyn is concerned, it's in  
7 phase two. And it's a mileage area around the  
8 park, McCarran Park. Were the fatalities  
9 occurring because people were going or exiting the  
10 park as part of your phase two? And I know that  
11 it's a very narrow question that you may not have  
12 the ability to answer right now but obviously if  
13 people are going to the park and if that's an area  
14 of interest where seniors are going and there's an  
15 increased chance of a fatality occurring or a  
16 severe injury, that along the lines of senior  
17 centers being highlighted, that parks be one of  
18 the criteria as well in order to provide seniors  
19 the opportunity to engage in outdoor activity in a  
20 safe manner.

21 Because I noticed that on the map  
22 where all the five Boroughs were highlighted,  
23 Williamsburg had two fatalities but not in close  
24 proximities. So I'm assuming that the Greenpoint  
25 section was due to the close proximity of two

fatalities.

COMMISSIONER WOLOCH: Right and not just fatalities but we're also looking at severe injuries. In a way the severe injuries almost become a better barometer--

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA:  
[Interposing] Um-hum.

COMMISSIONER WOLOCH: --in a sense. The number of fatalities is a very small universe. And to some extent that can be random. The accidents involving severe injuries, it's a larger universe. It can really start to tell you more about an area that's problematic.

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: Right. So I do look forward to engaging for future, identifying future sites for this program. And, you know, I commend the effort and I wanted to just make sure that if there's an opportunity to use the NORCs as an identifying tool for the City of New York for future sites that we do so. And as far as North Brooklyn is concerned, you know, the Williamsburg area seems to be left behind and I was just trying to understand why, although there were severe injuries as well as fatalities.

MS. DOUGHERTY: We had to zero in on a limited, you know, we couldn't do every area. And of course there is a concern in many of these other areas in addition to those we've chosen but we had to zero in on the areas that were, you know, had the densest, you know, number of fatalities and severe injuries.

And we had to identify those and, you know, we have been looking at--we are looking, moving forward, we have been already thinking about some of the things that you've mentioned, looking at the NORCs, looking at, you know, the generators and the senior centers.

You know, we will be looking at all these different elements in order to come up with our next group of areas. You know, unfortunately we couldn't address every single area. So we had to try to zero in on the most important and most dangerous areas for seniors.

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: Well I just want to make sure that as far as the Williamsburg section of Community Board 1, that we're not left behind once again in future sites because there's, judging from what you've already mapped out here,



1  
2 a need for a look into what can be done as far as  
3 traffic mitigation to assist reducing injuries.

4 And I know we're not going to be  
5 able to secure the whole City of New York, you  
6 know, in a matter of three years but I see enough  
7 of a need according to the data I see before me  
8 that you've given us. So I want to make sure that  
9 for the next round there's going to be increasing  
10 population in the area due to all of the housing  
11 development. And I want to make sure that we're  
12 supporting similar to what we had to deal with on  
13 Kent Avenue the lack of planning, that it's not  
14 going to be a reaction as opposed to appropriately  
15 planning, moving forward.

16 The left turns, and this is my last  
17 point, I just want to urge, I'm a big fan of  
18 knowing that I can turn when I'm signaled and I  
19 don't see that in the outer Boroughs as much as I  
20 see it in the Manhattan Borough. Is there an  
21 effort to increase left turn signals? I don't  
22 know if right turn signals exist but if they do,  
23 even better.

24 Just because, you know, I find that  
25 there's--it increases congestion as far as

thoroughfares are concerned especially on Flushing Avenue, in the intersection of Flushing and Broadway. We have no left or right turn signals and the street has been narrowed for safety but we still have an issue with crossing and it gets very densely populated in the corners.

So pedestrians get frustrated. They walk right in front of cars as you're trying to turn. And we're not dealing with the issue. We've probably put a Band-Aid on it but we haven't dealt with it 100%. Can we just take a look at that intersection? Because now there's a senior center that has been moved from Flushing Avenue to Bushwick Avenue and seniors have to cross along Flushing Avenue for access to their senior center.

COMMISSIONER WOLOCH: Yeah. And whatever specific locations you have, give them to us and we can take a look--

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA:  
[Interposing] I appreciate that. Thank you very much. I think they took down notation.

COMMISSIONER WOLOCH: Yeah.

MS. DOUGHERTY: Um-hum.

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: But I would

be happy to just follow up. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON LIU: Thank you Council Member Reyna. We've been joined by Council Member Rosie Mendez of Manhattan. We have a question from Chairperson Mark-Viverito.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO:  
Well I know we're going to go to the public testimony but I know that we have Deputy Commissioner Resnick here from DFTA and I don't know if there's any comment that DFTA would like to make with regards to this. And also just if you could describe a little bit about the level or coordination and what DFTA's role is in all of this.

MS. KAREN RESNICK: Thank you Councilwoman. We have an extremely collaborative relationship with our partners here at DOT. We've been helpful in distributing this wonderful safety video. And we, again, would be happy to come out to any of your centers to show it which is about pedestrian safety and how seniors can be observant and take precaution when crossing.

We have a team, a small team, at DFTA and partner with DOT to go out and make

1 presentations at health fairs and street fairs and  
2 at senior centers. In addition we've talked and  
3 this addresses some of Councilman Vacca and all of  
4 your questions as part of the age-friendly report.  
5 We are talking, it's much less sophisticated than  
6 the geospatial and engineering kind of analysis  
7 that DOT does.  
8

9 But we, and I know Gale Brewer  
10 pioneered this in her very District so perhaps  
11 Councilwoman Brewer can add to this. We're  
12 talking to and in fact in partnership with the  
13 Wagner School as a Capstone Project. We're  
14 talking about doing walkability and community  
15 surveys to do exactly what many of you have  
16 addressed, from the street perspective. Simply as  
17 from the perspective of an older person is this an  
18 age-friendly community.

19 From a NORC to a center to a safe  
20 corridor to street crossings, benches, and we  
21 think what's age-friendly is City-friendly. It  
22 works for mothers with strollers. It works for  
23 kids. It works for everybody. So we're just at  
24 the beginning of embarking on doing that. And  
25 you're right.

It's a fabulous project to do with Community Boards, to do in NORC communities, with kids as an intergenerational project. So it's really taking a community survey to look at pedestrian safety among other things. And I don't know if Councilwoman Brewer wants to comment on what they did in their District.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: No I think, I know Linda Rosenthal's been helpful on this issue also. I think that the blueprint that you put together with the Academy of Medicine is a wonderful document and the fact of the matter is some of these low-hanging fruits can be identified, and low cost, and hopefully can be rectified and improved.

So I do believe the benches, the curb cuts, the big font in the restaurants, the bathrooms, things that are mentioned in the blueprint, are something that we should all be cognizant of in working with intergenerational to do it. Thank you.

MS. RESNICK: And again we can make the video available to any and all of your community organizations and come out to make

presentations.

CHAIRPERSON LIU: Thank you very much, Council Member Mark-Viverito, Council Member Brewer and Commissioner Resnick. Thank you. And with that we want to thank the officials from the Administration, the DOT as well as DFTA, for testifying today and continue the great work.

We'll now hear from a panel consisting of Noah Budnick [phonetic], Ya-Ting [phonetic] Liu and Pat Dolan. We'll note for the record that we have been--we have received written testimony from Assembly Member Linda Rosenthal who was just mentioned before by Gale Brewer with regard to some of the initiatives taking place on the Upper West Side.

[Pause]

This panel will be followed by a panel consisting of Carolyn Stern and Stephanie Pinder.

[Pause]

CHAIRPERSON LIU: Whenever you're ready, please proceed.

MR. NOAH BUDNICK: Thank you. Good morning Chairman Liu, good morning members of the

Council. It's good to be here this morning. I want to talk about some background on Safe Routes for Seniors and ways to improve the DOT's exemplary program and also the desperate need for enforcement and prosecution to complement the engineering changes.

CHAIRPERSON LIU: Noah, could you please state your name for the record?

MR. BUDNICK: My name is Noah Budnick and I'm the Senior Policy Advisor for Transportation Alternatives. We're a membership organization in the City, 8,000 members strong, and 25,000 activists in our network that on the whole support the DOT's Safe Streets for Seniors Program.

We've worked with many of you and other elected officials around the City to document the need for improvements and also to plan improvements with a community process. In 2003 Transportation Alternatives got a grant from the State Department of Health to start the first Safe Routes for Seniors Program in New York and the first in the country.

This program was funded through the

1 Healthy Heart Program and the goal was to increase  
2 senior physical activity. Because walking is the  
3 main form of senior exercise we looked at what are  
4 the barriers to walking and what gets in the way  
5 of walking. And by working with senior centers  
6 and NORCs and other communities, we identified  
7 some of the [off mic] yes.

8 [Pause]

9 Okay. We identified some of the  
10 principle barriers to senior walking. And they're  
11 little things that people like us would seem to  
12 take for granted. Not enough time to cross the  
13 street, no curb cuts like many of you have  
14 mentioned, and uneven sidewalks which can be a  
15 barrier to seniors because they can cause them to  
16 fall. So by identifying these very simple and low  
17 cost measures we've put together a suite of  
18 improvements that we think can make streets safe  
19 for seniors.

20 As many have mentioned this morning  
21 the senior population is large in New York, over  
22 1,000,000 over 65 and that's growing. By 2015,  
23 18% of the City's population will be over 65 and  
24 by 2030 that number will be up to 20%. That'll be  
25



more than the number of school-aged children currently in New York City. And as New Yorkers age there's going to be a shift from driving to walking which makes these pedestrian-focused safety improvements that much more important.

We also know that seniors are disproportionately affected by crashes as was mentioned this morning. Seniors represent now 12% of the population but 39% of serious injuries and deaths in New York City. And overall pedestrian fatalities are still too high in New York City. One fatality is too many. In New York on average a pedestrian is killed every 36 hours. And a recent study has shown that the New York metro area ranked number one in metro areas of over 1,000,000 residents with the highest share of pedestrian fatalities.

So the DOT has started Safe Streets for Seniors. It's the only program of its kind in the US. And the question now is how can we expand it and sustain its impact. We believe that the Safe Streets for Seniors Program could create greater mobility for more seniors if it targeted areas where seniors live, not just where crashes

1  
2 occur. For example in the ten high density senior  
3 census blocks in the Lower East Side, only one was  
4 selected by the DOT for the Safe Streets for  
5 Seniors District.

6 We shouldn't wait for crashes to  
7 mount before making improvements. We know where  
8 seniors live. We know where they walk in large  
9 numbers. And we should target those parts of the  
10 City. And furthermore streets may not have high  
11 numbers of senior crashes even though seniors live  
12 nearby because streets with a lot of traffic can  
13 be deterrents to seniors and discourage them from  
14 walking down them.

15 To that end Transportation  
16 Alternatives asks the City Council and City Hall  
17 work together to codify Safe Streets for Seniors  
18 into law. Since 2006 Transportation Alternatives  
19 has developed the Elder Districts Model,  
20 neighborhood zones where high numbers of senior  
21 citizens live, similar to school zones or historic  
22 districts. These areas would be prioritized for  
23 improvements. And the legislation could set  
24 criteria based on senior centers, population,  
25 density, destinations, travel patterns and

crashes, and give a menu of interventions.

By codifying the Safe Streets for Seniors Program you could continue this good work far into the future beyond this Council and beyond this Administration for when our children are seniors. And to help provide funding for the continued Safe Streets for Seniors improvements, in addition to working with Albany, I urge you to speak with the New York Congressional Delegation and help convince them to make Safe Routes for Seniors a part of the next Federal transportation bill.

Transportation Alternatives has recently met with New York members of Congress and US DOT Secretary Ray LaHood and pitched them on the Safe Routes for Seniors idea. And they had a welcome and very warm reception to it. This would be similar to what happened with Safe Routes to School which was started in New York City over ten years ago, adopted by the New York City Department of Transportation and then became an integral part of the last Federal transportation bill where New York received \$32 million for Safe Routes to School funding, I believe about half of which went

to New York City.

The last thing I want to talk about is the dire importance of enforcement to complement engineering changes. Strong enforcement, adjudication and prosecution must be used to hold drivers accountable for their actions. Camera enforcement, as the DOT mentioned, is a very key part of this and something Transportation Alternatives strongly supports.

Over Thanksgiving the need for enforcement was proved all too tragically when 78-year old Peter Sabados [phonetic] and his 77-year old wife Lillian were run down on Staten Island. The driver, Amira Laperic [phonetic], had a suspended license and has had his license suspended 29 times in the last 3 years. No street design could have kept this guy off the road which is why in addition to engineering we need rigorous legal and public awareness campaigns aimed at changing driver behavior.

In Transportation Alternative's recent report, Executive Order, we've called on the Bloomberg Administration to create a Mayoral

Office of Road Safety that would take a multi-agency approach to improving traffic safety on City streets. And we ask the Council to support this recommendation in 2010.

Despite the risks that seniors face on City streets, they're walkers. And walking and transit are the main modes of transportation for older people in New York City. And this is a really good thing. Walking to the park and running errands, visiting friends are all things that allow seniors to age in place, to have a high quality of life, and stay active. And we want seniors to continue walking. When they walk they're healthier. And it contributes to their public health and quality of life.

This improves the quality of life for all of us as well. And I'd like to say that the time spent this morning and over the last two years working on Safe Routes for Seniors in New York City I think really shows a compassion in this City that is not present in other cities that have yet to start Safe Routes for Seniors Program and that we're thinking about the most vulnerable people in the City says a lot about where New

1  
2 Yorkers are setting our priorities. These are  
3 very wise investments because by making streets  
4 safer for our most vulnerable users, they make  
5 them safer for everybody else. Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON LIU: Thank you very  
7 much Noah. Ya-Ting?

8 MS. YA-TING LIU: Good morning  
9 Chairman Lie, Chairwoman Mark-Viverito, members of  
10 the Transportation and Aging Committees. Thank  
11 you for the opportunity to testify before you  
12 today on this important issue. My name is Ya-Ting  
13 Liu [phonetic]. I am the Federal Advocate for  
14 Tri-State Transportation Campaign. We are a  
15 regional policy watchdog organization that is  
16 working for a more equitable and balance  
17 transportation network in the region. So I'm here  
18 today to share with you sort of our analysis of  
19 senior pedestrian safety in New York City and some  
20 of our recommendations.

21 Michelle Ernst, the Staff Analyst  
22 at Tri-State Transportation actually co-authored  
23 that report by Transportation for America,  
24 Dangerous by Design. A lot of the sort of grim  
25 and dismal statistics on senior safety has already

1  
2 been discussed at great lengths this morning both  
3 in Chairman Liu's introduction and with New York  
4 City DOT's presentation.

5               So I want to sort of, for the sake  
6 of time, I want to sort of go right into our  
7 recommendations. We really applaud the work of  
8 New York City DOT for its innovation in Safe  
9 Streets for Seniors Program. And we think that  
10 these kind of programs in New York City should be  
11 reinforced, enhanced, expanded.

12              So how can we do that? We really  
13 see the opportunity lies in Albany. And we urge  
14 City Council Members to support two things. First  
15 a home rule message or a City Council resolution  
16 on a complete streets policy to push forward  
17 pending State complete streets legislation. I  
18 have the legislation, the bill numbers, in my  
19 testimony.

20              So basically a complete streets  
21 policy at the City and State level would require  
22 engineers to design roads to accommodate and  
23 consider the needs of all users any time a new  
24 road is built or an existing road is retrofitted.  
25 And that policy, actually the similar policy is

being pushed forward at the Federal level as well.

Second, we need to require New York State DOT to designate a higher share of available Federal transportation dollars to programs that aim to make biking and walking safer, particularly the put of money Federal transportation money called the Highway Safety Improvement Program. Currently New York State is grossly underutilizing this program leaving \$70 million of available Federal transportation dollars on the table.

Over the last three years from 2005 to 2008, New York State has received about \$5.6 billion for Federal transportation money. And they spent only about 1%, 1% of \$5.6 billion on pedestrian projects throughout the State. We think that that's an appalling number. And we urge City Council support to encourage Governor Paterson and the State Legislature to pass the complete streets policy at the State level and also get New York State DOT to designate a higher share of those Federal funds towards pedestrian safety. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON LIU: Well thank you very much Ya-Ting for your testimony. And now



we'll hear from Patricia Dolan.

MS. PATRICIA DOLAN: Good morning.

My name is Patricia Dolan. I'm the Director of Queens Connection. It's a program of the Queens Community House in Queens that works for safer, more affordable and accessible transportation for seniors.

This may be the last Transportation Committee hearing that I have the privilege to address under Chairman Liu's chairmanship. On behalf of Queens seniors I want to thank the Committee and Chairman Liu for making the City a safer and easier place for seniors to live in. You have been a steadfast ally for seniors whether it was finding funds to operate the hundreds of vans that seniors depend on or advocating and obtaining more and better access-a-ride for disabled seniors or resisting cost-cutting plans to eliminate bus routes around the City which would have devastated seniors. You have been on the line for all of us. Thank you John. He's also from Queens.

Mobility is the key to seniors' independent living. And we applaud the Department

1 of Transportation for what it has done and I'm  
2 going to specifically talk about Flushing because  
3 this is where I live and it is the area that I am  
4 most familiar with. The plan has brought about  
5 reconfigured intersections on Main Street and  
6 Northern Boulevard, for example, which make  
7 crossing these very challenging streets measurably  
8 safer for pedestrians and drivers alike.  
9

10 While there's no real hard data  
11 available yet to demonstrate the effects of the  
12 improvement, what we're hearing from seniors who  
13 live in the community is that it's easier and it's  
14 safer for them to walk on the streets of Flushing.  
15 And I might add that the streets on Flushing and  
16 there's material that was on the DOT website and  
17 on the DFTA website demonstrate just by the layout  
18 of those streets how difficult it was to cross  
19 them before these improvements were made.

20 The Department of Aging has made  
21 critical contributions in making these  
22 improvements throughout the City and specifically  
23 Queens. However the Department of the Aging and  
24 the Department of Transportation are faced with a  
25 conundrum here as they seek to spread this program

1 throughout the rest of the City and that is that  
2 the vast majority of seniors in New York City are  
3 unaffiliated. They do not belong to senior  
4 centers. They don't go to senior programs. They  
5 don't receive senior services from senior centers.  
6 They live independent lives and wish to do so for  
7 as long as they possibly can.  
8

9 There has to be some way of  
10 reaching out to these seniors and bringing them  
11 into the planning process before these programs  
12 are implemented because once they are implemented  
13 they're going to be in place for decades, for  
14 many, many years before the City will be able to  
15 go forward in doing more about it. At the same  
16 time the City is facing unprecedented fiscal  
17 challenges and it's going to be up to the City  
18 Council to find funding to improve safety on all  
19 our of streets. And once again I want to thank  
20 all of you for the tremendous support that you  
21 have afforded people in our senior population over  
22 the past eight years. Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON LIU: Very kind of you  
24 Pat. Thank you very much and I want to thank this  
25 panel for testifying today. I'm sorry; we have a

question from Council Member Brewer.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you very much. I'm interested in the Federal money that's not being spent. Is that something that's up on the web? Is that something that has other kinds of advocacy going on? Is it something that's allocated upstate? What is the status of that huge amount of Federal money, do you know?

MS. LIU: This is sort of the ongoing, sort of work of groups like Tri-State Transportation Campaign. Unfortunately the State DOT planning process, how they pick projects, how they spend money, how they prioritize, how--

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER:  
[Interposing] Is this the NYTIC [phonetic] process--

MS. LIU: --they spend money.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: --or the NYTIC process or the DOT process or both?

MS. LIU: It's both but ultimately we feel the responsibility lies with New York State DOT.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. So thank you very much.

COMMITTEE ON AGING AND  
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

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CHAIRPERSON LIU: Thank you Council  
Member Brewer. And I want to thank the panel for  
testifying today. We'll now hear from a panel  
consisting of Carolyn Stern and Stephanie Pinder.

[Pause]

CHAIRPERSON LIU: Please come on  
down to the witness table.

[Pause]

MS. STEPHANIE PINDER: Good  
morning.

CHAIRPERSON LIU: good morning,  
please proceed.

MS. PINDER: For older adults  
living on their own, unsafe environments come in  
many forms. A busy street--

CHAIRPERSON LIU: [Interposing]  
Would you be Ms. Stern?

MS. PINDER: I'm Stephanie Pinder.

CHAIRPERSON LIU: Oh okay. It  
doesn't matter the order but please proceed,  
please identify yourself for the record.

MS. PINDER: Sure. I'm Stephanie  
Pinder from Lincoln Square Neighborhood Center;  
it's a Settlement House on the west side of

Manhattan based in Amsterdam Houses and Amsterdam Addition. For older adults living on their own, unsafe environments come in many forms, a busy street without a crosswalk, an inoperable elevator, a broken door lock or a dimly lit hallway.

Fortunately for the 600 seniors living in the Amsterdam Houses and the Amsterdam Addition Public Housing Development on the Upper West Side of Manhattan and the 175 who call Lincoln Amsterdam House home, which used to be a Mitchell Lama co-op but is now fair market. But thanks to NYCHA and Section 8 there are still over 175 seniors who are able to live there. They have the resources and opportunities offered through our NORC supportive services program.

And NORC was mentioned many times today so I won't necessarily define it but I assume everyone knows what a NORC is. And its supportive services programs within those communities provide comprehensive center-based services and community-based services for those older adults.

As one of the requirements and I

1 think as one of the needs we identified, we formed  
2 a NORC Advisory Council in July of 2000 and it  
3 includes representatives from all over the West  
4 Side: law enforcement, building management, local  
5 government, service agencies, our Community Board,  
6 and funders.  
7

8 And together we dedicated ourselves  
9 to ensuring a safe and supportive environment.  
10 Located in the busy Upper West Side neighborhood  
11 of Manhattan, we're just steps from the Lincoln  
12 Center for the Performing Arts. So we'll already  
13 represented for arts and culture, restaurants,  
14 shops and luxury apartments.

15 However directly behind Lincoln  
16 Center which many people don't seem to know there  
17 is a behind Lincoln Center is a housing complex  
18 which few who come to see or hear the world-renown  
19 cultural icons know.

20 Administered by NYCHA the 600 older  
21 adults over the age of 60 are mainly African  
22 American and Latino. They are poor and would be  
23 unable to afford other apartments in the  
24 neighborhood. More than 90% have lived in the  
25 development for at least half their lives. Many

were born and raised there.

Over the years our program has grown in scope and size and we're proud to offer comprehensive on-site and in-home services including community health care, social services, congregate meals, recreation and educational services.

Not only do we believe though that the mission of NORC supportive services program is to enable healthy individual and healthy families, we also work to enable a healthy community. To that end the NORC Advisory Council has taken on such issues as hunger, safety and security, and ensuring the availability of mental health care for older adults. In order for our seniors to take advantage of our program they often need to walk to our center as well as throughout the neighborhood to participate in community life.

Through their participation in the NORC Advisory Council and our loss of two seniors, one on 64<sup>th</sup> Street and one on 66<sup>th</sup> Street in 2 fatal car accidents, we identified transportation as an important issue. Originally in 2002 when we did a survey, our seniors thought safety and security



was the number one issue of concern in terms of not having an elder-friendly community. Last year when we did the resurvey, transportation became number one.

It's an issue of traffic lights that change too quickly, lack of sufficient bus stops, speeding cars, and insufficient curb cuts. In 2006 the Lincoln Square NORC teamed up with Assembly Member Linda Rosenthal and Transportation Alternatives to study our area and to produce a report about street safety.

This report entitled Upper West Side Senior Pedestrian Safety Plan was produced and calls for common sense improvements and low costs on to our streets and sidewalks that would not only reduce death and injury due to automobile crashes but would also make walking an enjoyable and healthy activity for our seniors.

Many of the changes that we asked for in this report focused on making small changes to our built environment to promote safety, a sense of belonging, and increased levels of overall public health. To date the Department of Transportation has changed signal timing in many

1 intersections between 60<sup>th</sup> and 81<sup>st</sup> Streets to  
2 accommodate slower crosses. However in talking to  
3 our seniors they don't see the changes. They do  
4 not feel any safer crossing our streets and it  
5 still takes--the lights change more quickly than  
6 they can get across.  
7

8           The automobile traffic surrounding  
9 our center moves incredibly quickly and motor  
10 vehicle drivers clearly feel they have the right-  
11 of-way, especially along our extra-wide avenues  
12 such as West End and Amsterdam Avenue. Our  
13 seniors and all walkers in this area should be  
14 given a head start to cross these wide avenues, a  
15 signal to the drivers and pedestrians that they  
16 actually have the right of way. We also need  
17 better sight lines so that our seniors can see  
18 oncoming traffic better and that automobiles can  
19 see our seniors.

20           Finally we would love to see  
21 improvements that encourage our seniors to walk,  
22 such as pedestrian islands on the extra-wide  
23 avenues, more benches, especially near bus stops  
24 and mid-block, and anything that would calm the  
25 traffic and make walking a more pleasant activity.

We've been working hard to improve conditions in our area since 2000. We plan to continue our advocacy work surrounding this issue and look to the Department of Transportation for concrete designs and a timeline. Our area has been extensively studied by Linda Rosenthal, by the Department of Transportation, by Transportation Alternatives, by our Community Board. And the suggestions for improvement have been made so we really need to get to work to make streets safer for all users. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON LIU: Thank you very much Ms. Pinder. Ms. Stern?

MS. CAROLYN STEM: It's not Stern.

CHAIRPERSON LIU: Okay. Sorry about that, Ms. Stem.

[Witness arranging mics]

MS. STEM: You've changed my name from Stem to Stern. [Laughing]

CHAIRPERSON LIU: Didn't--okay.

MS. STEM: Right. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today about the importance of safe streets for seniors. My name is Carolyn Stem and I work with the New York

Academy of Medicine on its Age-friendly New York City project.

The New York Academy of Medicine, NYAM, has been advancing the health of people in the City since 1847. An independent organization, NYAM addresses the health challenges facing the world's urban populations through interdisciplinary approaches, to innovative research, education, community engagement and policy leadership.

Our current priorities include creating environments that support healthy aging, strengthening systems that prevent disease, and promote the public's health, and working to eliminate health disparities. In partnership with the Mayor's Office and the City Council, NYAM has been working on improving New York City's age-friendliness.

As part of that project we conducted a year-long assessment, talking to more than 1,500 older adults and experts about their concerns and vision for an age-friendly New York. Safe streets and walkability emerged as key themes. Safe streets have been recognized

internationally as a key determinant of successful and healthy aging and active. And pedestrian traffic safety is needed, is indeed a major concern for seniors in New York.

Today however we would like to highlight sidewalks as another essential element of safe streets and a core predictor of walkability for seniors. Walkability refers to the extent to which an area is conducive to people walking around, spending time in an area, and interacting with one another. Walkability is important for all residents but is especially important to older adults.

In New York City walking and public transit are the most common modes of transportation for older adults. A recent survey of AARP members in the metropolitan area found that 52% often walked to get to where they want to go. One of New York's greatest strengths for the aging population is the proximity to stores, services, cultural opportunities, and parks.

However unless our streets are safe and our sidewalks are passable, older New Yorkers cannot take full advantage of all that this City

has to offer. An age-friendly City is a walkable City and one where streets and sidewalks are clean, accessible and safe. Safe streets and sidewalks have tremendous public health advantages.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, moderate exercise like walking maintains the ability of older adults to live independently, reduces risk of falling, decreases risk of heart disease, high blood pressure and diabetes, reduces symptoms of anxiety and depression, helps control joint swelling and pain associated with arthritis and improves social support from friends and families' health.

Smooth and accessible sidewalks and streets are also important for the prevention of falls. In 2007 there were more than 50,000 hospitalizations statewide due to falls among older adults. And between 2001 and '07, the rate of falls-related deaths in New York State increased 13% and falls-related hospitalizations increased 14%.

Research has demonstrated that most outdoor falls, 73% among older adults, are the

1  
2 result of environmental factors such as uneven  
3 surfaces and tripping or slipping on objects. As  
4 an aside to my testimony I just would like to say  
5 that I have recently been a victim of such an  
6 accident, falling in the street on Amsterdam  
7 Avenue in my neighborhood. And I don't even  
8 think, consider myself as a senior-senior but a  
9 junior-senior.

10 Our Age-friendly New York City  
11 research is equally clear about the importance of  
12 streets and sidewalks to the health and safety of  
13 seniors. New Yorkers across the five Boroughs  
14 reported on their need for clean, safe, accessible  
15 streets and sidewalks.

16 People from many communities  
17 including many of our immigrant neighborhoods  
18 described sidewalks as hazardous places that were  
19 poorly lit, poorly maintained, overcrowded with  
20 people, dogs, litter, bicycles and construction,  
21 and slippery or full of puddles after a heavy rain  
22 or a snow.

23 In Brooklyn forums, people  
24 mentioned cars parked on the sidewalks. And one  
25 Bronx resident said "there are zero sidewalks in

the Bronx". These obstacles make it difficult for older people with low vision, poor balance or who use wheelchairs or walkers to get around. The lack of benches along public walkways was also mentioned frequently.

One focus group participant said "there used to be a place where we could just rest and sit together". Another reported "we need more benches, people can grab onto as they walk down the street. You can see people gripping at storefronts for stability".

The good news is that the dangers of our sidewalks and streets can be diminished and the public health benefits of them enhanced. The City is already taking important steps to make changes to the built environment that will make our streets and sidewalks more age friendly.

We applaud the work of the Department of Transportation in implementing its Safe Streets for Seniors Program which is evaluating pedestrian conditions in the City from the perspective of older residents and making engineering changes such as extending pedestrian crossing times at crosswalks and shortening



crossing distances, altering curbs and sidewalks,  
restricting vehicle turns and narrowing roadways.

The City's coordinated Street  
Furniture Franchise is addressing seniors' needs  
for bus shelters and public toilets. Current  
efforts to build plazas and increase open spaces  
around roadways are also good for older adults as  
they provide important resting places and offer an  
additional safe refuge from busy and dangerous  
streets.

Each of these initiatives which are  
highlighted in the City's recent report, Age-  
Friendly New York City, Enhancing Our City's  
Livability for Older New Yorkers, will improve the  
lives of older New Yorkers.

To fully address the problem of  
City sidewalks will take a cross-sectoral effort  
as well as creativity. Most of the 12,750 miles  
of sidewalk in New York City are there  
responsibility of land owners to repair. In fact  
only 4% of sidewalks are on City property. And  
DOT repairs less than 1% of all New York City  
sidewalks.

Under Section 19-152 of the

Administrative Code of the City of New York,  
property owners are responsible for installing,  
repairing and maintaining sidewalks adjoining  
their properties. If timely repairs are not made  
by the property owner the City may hire private  
construction firms to make the repairs and bill  
the property owner for the costs of the repairs.

We are pleased that DOT has  
initiated an expedited sidewalk repair pilot  
program that allows the City to repair sidewalks  
and charge landlords if repairs are not made  
within 45 days. If this program is successful it  
should be expanded and perhaps targeted to those  
neighborhoods with a large number of elderly  
residents. In addition to supporting the  
expedited sidewalk repair pilot program and  
expansion of the City's coordinated Street  
Furniture Franchise, we offer the following  
suggestions for enhancing sidewalk safety in New  
York City.

- Continued support for Business  
Improvement Districts and their  
efforts to make business  
districts safe, clean and

passable.

- Increase sidewalk maintenance efforts, snow and leaf removal, cleaning litter, lighting and repair.
- Enhance enforcement of existing regulations, parking, curb cuts, trash and snow removal, dog poop, bicycles, etcetera.
- Improve the standards for sidewalk smoothness.
- Promote a design competition for perches, resting posts that can be installed across the City.

Both the State and Federal governments are considering complete streets legislation, Bill number S-5711 and A-08587, which is aimed at making streets more usable and safe for all travelers, bicyclists, public transportation vehicles and passengers, motorists and pedestrians, regardless of age or ability.

New York City should proactively adopt these standards. We understand that

1 implementing all of these recommendations citywide  
2 is daunting and encourage starting in specific  
3 neighborhoods to assess the feasibility and impact  
4 of making these changes.  
5

6 With support from City Councilwoman  
7 Viverito, NYAM is implementing an Aging  
8 Improvement District pilot in East Harlem. Aging  
9 Improvement Districts are local efforts to improve  
10 the age-friendliness of a specific neighborhood.  
11 As part of the Aging Improvement District program  
12 communities could also become pilot sites for  
13 concentrated efforts to improve the safety and  
14 accessibility of streets and sidewalks.

15 Working with local residents and  
16 businesses the City could increase enforcement of  
17 existing regulations, expedite sidewalk repair,  
18 install perches and public toilets, and assess  
19 intersections for pedestrian safety. Making our  
20 streets and sidewalks safe and accessible will  
21 require all of us working together both in local  
22 neighborhoods and citywide.

23 In conjunction with the Mayor's  
24 Office and the City Council, NYAM will be staffing  
25 a Commission for an age-friendly New York City

1  
2 that includes leaders from multiple sectors of the  
3 City. The Commission will provide critical  
4 leadership on this and other issues affecting  
5 older New Yorkers.

6 Together, City government, the  
7 private sector and residents can make simple but  
8 important changes to our streets and sidewalks  
9 that will improve the health of older New Yorkers,  
10 allow them to connect with friends, families and  
11 critical services and support them in continuing  
12 to be a vital part of the life of the City.

13 We look forward to working with  
14 Age-Friendly New York City Commission and all of  
15 you to make New York City's streets and sidewalks  
16 safe and accessible for New Yorkers of all ages.  
17 Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON LIU: Well thank you  
19 very much for that very thoughtful and  
20 comprehensive testimony. And I want to thank both  
21 of you for participating in today's joint hearing.

22 MS. STEM: Thank you.

23 MS. PINDER: Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON LIU: There being no  
25 other witnesses today, this hearing of the City

1	COMMITTEE ON AGING AND	110
	COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION	
2	Council's Committees on Transportation and Aging	
3	is adjourned.	
4	[Gavel banging]	
5	[END 1002.MP3]	

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Laura L. Springate certify that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. I further certify that I am not related to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that I am in no way interested in the outcome of this matter.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Laura L. Springate". The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored, slightly textured background.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_Laura L. Springate\_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_December 10, 2009\_\_\_\_\_