

**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
HEARING BEFORE THE CITY COUNCIL  
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION  
MARCH 3, 2015**

Good afternoon, Chairman Rodriguez and members of the Transportation Committee. My name is Ryan Russo and I am the Deputy Commissioner for Transportation Planning and Management for the New York City Department of Transportation (DOT). I am glad to be here representing Commissioner Polly Trottenberg.

Joining me today are Keith Kerman, the Chief Fleet Officer for the Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS), Stacey Hodge, DOT's Director of Freight Mobility, and our colleague Ed Pincar. Thank you for inviting us to discuss your concerns about the impact of truck traffic on pedestrian and bicyclist safety.

Since day one, the de Blasio Administration has focused relentlessly on eliminating traffic fatalities in New York City through Vision Zero. The Mayor's leadership, and all of our combined efforts, has begun to change the way New Yorkers think about and act on our streets. Support for this program continues to grow across the city, and our partnership with the Council in pursuing this bold vision is a key piece in furthering our progress.

Vision Zero's year-one results are encouraging. Between 2011 and 2013, collisions with trucks killed an average of 20 pedestrians and bicyclists each year, which constituted 13 percent of such fatalities. Last year, while we ramped up our Vision Zero program, the whole number and total share of pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities caused by trucks decreased to 17 people and 11 percent respectively.

This decline, while modest, is a step in the right direction. The city's economy depends in large measure on trucks delivering goods to residents and businesses. Yet considering our estimate that trucks make up approximately seven percent of vehicular traffic in the city, we must recognize their disproportionate impact on pedestrian and bicyclist safety. Today's hearing is timely and important, and we share the Council's passion on this issue.

Two weeks ago, along with our partners at the New York Police City Department (NYPD) and many Council Members, we released our Borough Pedestrian Safety Action Plans. Each plan thoroughly analyzes the unique conditions of one New York City borough and pinpoints the conditions and characteristics of pedestrian fatalities and severe injuries on that borough's streets. We then lay out a comprehensive and data-driven approach for addressing the most challenging corridors, intersections, and areas in all five boroughs that disproportionately account for pedestrian fatalities and severe injuries. These plans recommend a series of actions including safety engineering improvements, targeted enforcement, and expanded education efforts to make New York City's street even safer.

The core premise of our Borough Plans is that a strong focus on pedestrians will enhance safety for all roadway users. We have already begun to add critical upgrades to these locations, including the expanded use of leading pedestrian intervals, the modification of signal timing to reduce off-peak speeding, and the implementation of at least 50 safety engineering improvement projects this year—and every year until we reach our goal.

We are confident these improvements will help address some of the dangers trucks pose to pedestrians and bicyclists. This belief in part reflects the fact that nearly half of the truck routes on city streets fall within Vision Zero priority corridors and areas. More importantly, we also know that 71 percent of pedestrian or bicyclist injuries caused by trucks occurred with such areas.

The map behind me overlays the truck route network with the priority areas in Manhattan. As you can see, there is considerable overlap in the borough with the highest percent of pedestrian fatalities due to truck crashes. I can share similar maps for the other boroughs with the Committee, all of which tell the same story: we are already targeting the streets with the greatest need to address the unique dangers trucks present to New Yorkers.

Of course, the Administration and DOT are also committed to furthering last year's decrease in truck-related fatalities, and have already started focusing on truck safety as a key Vision Zero goal. The initial Vision Zero action plan identified that large vehicle crashes are nearly three times more likely to result in a pedestrian fatality than crashes involving passenger vehicles. Last year, DOT and DCAS convened a Truck Safety Task Force to discuss with key stakeholders in government and the trucking industry how to identify practical, balanced, and effective truck safety solutions.

The Task Force is working on several fronts, including a thorough assessment of truck crash data, an evaluation of truck driver training, and improved enforcement of existing laws and regulations. In fact, last month DOT, NYPD, and the New York State Department of Transportation teamed up to conduct three truck enforcement blitzes focused in Brooklyn. Additional events in Brooklyn and Queens will continue this month, including one in Jamaica Hills this week, and we welcome your input on other priority areas to target. These are not just one time blitzes; they are events where different government agencies share best practices and knowledge so that capacity for sustained enforcement grows.

In addition to working collaboratively with the trucking industry, the City also recognizes that it must lead the charge in adopting new practices. To that end, last month the Mayor announced that in 2015 DCAS will begin retrofitting 240 City trucks with side guards, which are rails between the front and rear tires of a truck that can protect pedestrians and bicyclists from being caught under the vehicle in case of a crash.

Widespread adoption of side guards in the United Kingdom is credited with reducing fatalities and severe injuries in side impacts by 61 percent for bicyclists and 20 percent for pedestrians. If the initial rollout goes as expected, every new City truck will be designed to include a side guard moving forward.

DOT has also implemented a number of initiatives to improve truck safety, and we are pursuing more. Our Office of Freight Mobility works to identify potential enhancements to the city's truck route network and regulatory framework. A recent signature success was the 2011 New York State law requiring all trucks registered in the state to be equipped with cross-over mirrors. These mirrors help eliminate a truck driver's "blind spot" and allow the driver to see any person at least three feet tall and passing one foot in front of the vehicle. Cross-over mirrors provide an excellent model on how multiple stakeholders in and outside of government can work together to bring significant change to our streets.

Along with regulation, enforcement of dangerous truck behavior is essential. DOT works with the NYPD to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of their enforcement of truck routes and rules. DOT developed an insert for officers' memo books for every precinct in the city that detailed truck route rules and regulations. Our agencies also share and analyze traffic crash and summons data to inform what areas need additional enforcement efforts or engineering re-design. This on-going coordination has expanded and improved under Vision Zero, and it will lead to more and smarter enforcement, and hopefully fewer crashes.

Another way DOT is seeking to reduce the impact of trucks, both in terms of crashes and congestion, is working with some businesses in Manhattan to shift their delivery windows to between the hours of 7 p.m. and 6 a.m. This change can make sense for businesses, because it allows staff to focus more on customer service and less on daytime deliveries during business hours. Carriers benefit from a savings in fuel & labor costs because deliveries occur when there is less traffic congestion. Ultimately, pedestrians in the area could win because less daytime delivery trucks results in less conflicts with trucks.

We are also educating those pedestrians and bicyclists about the challenges of operating a truck on the city's streets. Our truck blind spot training program, "Truck's Eye View," literally puts pedestrians and bicyclists in the driver's seat—and from there they can better understand what truck drivers see and better protect themselves when using streets in the vicinity of large trucks. We have educated over 4,000 New Yorkers so far at Summer Streets and other public events, and 97 percent of participants said they would change their behavior when walking or cycling around trucks due to the training.

As you can see, the City takes very seriously the potential threat trucks pose to pedestrian and bicyclists. Our strong approach combines engineering, enforcement, and education in smart, innovative ways that will continue to help make our streets safer for all users. We want to work with you to deliver the most effective program possible.

The first bill under consideration today, Intro 641, would require the Department to conduct a comprehensive study every five years regarding pedestrian and bicyclist safety on truck routes. We share Council Member Chin's concern on this issue, and we hope after today's testimony the Committee recognizes that DOT is already studying the problem in a comprehensive fashion through our Vision Zero efforts and specifically with the release of our Borough Plans. Although we have some concerns, we look forward to working with the City Council on this bill.

The second issue on the agenda today concerns the City's truck route network. This system, which was implemented in the 1980s, is one part of a regulatory framework for trucks and commercial vehicles that includes a variety of other city, state, and federal guidelines. The collection of routes, which can be through or local routes, accounts for approximately ten percent of the city's streets.

Educating truck drivers about the proper routes is one of DOT's top priorities, and we pursue this objective in numerous ways. Each year the agency distributes approximately 80,000 copies of the truck route map. We are currently working to improve the map, including translating it into other languages for the first time, and expect the redesign will be complete this spring.

Our focus also includes leveraging technology to spread key information to as many stakeholders as possible. The truck route data is available in electronic form for any company or driver to download

and use. We are also working with companies with online mapping tools, including Google, to determine what opportunities exist to incorporate these routes into their systems. Successful collaboration would only improve understanding of the truck route network, especially for drivers coming from out of state.

It is important to note that though trucks are primarily required to stay on truck routes, they are able to travel on any city street when their destination requires it.

A vital and visible element of the truck route system is DOT's truck route signage. New York City is one of only a handful of cities in the nation with a comprehensive network of truck route streets, and the signage we use is unique. Considering that the truck route system constitutes approximately 10 percent of the city's streets, DOT focuses on placing positive signage: we sign where trucks should be, not where they should not be. This policy reflects resource limitations as well as sound traffic engineering.

From a practical standpoint, the City cannot place negative signage on 90 percent of streets that are not truck routes. Moreover, as noted earlier, trucks comprise only a small percentage of the vehicles in the city. Our signage program focuses on the drivers of passenger vehicles, which are far more prevalent. Their attention to essential directions, such as "Stop" and "Do Not Enter," can be diminished when too many signs that are not relevant to them are posted.

Intro 315 would require the Department to study and rank truck route compliance on every route in the city, and in certain instances mandate the installation of negative signage. While we understand and agree with Council Member Vallone's desire to combat illegal truck traffic, this bill would establish impractical requirements. Identifying the streets that experience the most amount of illegal truck activity would require the Department somehow to observe every street in the city and then to determine whether a truck is located there properly. This seems to require staff to physically stop and assess the destination documents of every truck.

In addition, truck compliance issues by definition concern enforcement, and there is no indication that negative signage ensures compliance. For these reasons, we have significant concerns about Intro 315 in its current form. We nevertheless welcome the opportunity to discuss with the Council, the NYPD, and other stakeholders how to improve compliance with the city's truck route network.

Through Vision Zero's pedestrian focus, increased enforcement, and DOT's truck-specific programs, the City is taking smart steps to enhance safety for all roadway users throughout the five boroughs, on and off of truck routes. Commissioner Trottenberg appreciates the Council's focus and interest on this matter, and we look forward to continuing to work closely with you to make our streets even safer.

Thank you again for inviting us to testify. We are happy to answer any questions you may have.



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Gale A. Brewer, Borough President

**TESTIMONY OF GALE A. BREWER, MANHATTAN BOROUGH  
PRESIDENT, TO THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON  
TRANSPORTATION ON INTRO 315 AND 641, ON THE SAFETY OF  
PEDESTRIANS AND BICYCLISTS AS THEY RELATE TO TRUCKS AND  
TRUCK ROUTES IN NEW YORK CITY  
March 3, 2015**

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Thank you to Chair Rodriguez and the members of the Transportation Committee for the opportunity to testify today. I am here to voice my support for Intros 315 and 641, introduced by Council Member Margaret Chin, related to the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists as they relate to trucks and truck routes in New York City.

Intro 315 would require a study every three years on the compliance with the rules of New York City by truck drivers as related to truck routes. Intro 641 would require a similar study every five years on pedestrian and bicyclist safety as related to truck routes. I strongly support both of these bills, which were crafted in the spirit of Vision Zero and our collective efforts to combat fatalities and serious injuries caused by vehicular traffic.

Over the last year, our city has made notable progress in making New York City's streets safer. We have lowered the speed limit, redesigned dangerous intersections, and passed laws to hold reckless drivers more accountable. As a result, pedestrian deaths in New York City fell to a historic low last year. This is an accomplishment of which we should all be proud. But there is still much more that we can do to ensure the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists, starting with Intros 315 and 641. We know that, in 2014, truck collisions resulted in the deaths of 23 pedestrians and one bicyclist. These bills will allow us to study the role trucks and truck routes played in helping create unsafe commuting environments that led to these tragedies, and create comprehensive plans to improve safety.

There is no denying the important role trucks play in supporting our city's economy. According to data collected by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, 320 million tons of freight move through the New York City metropolitan region each year. What's more, 80% of these goods are carried by trucks. Though clearly a vital component to ensuring goods are transported throughout our city, this incredible volume of trucks adds to Manhattan's notorious congestion problem and helps create dangerous commuting environments for pedestrians and bicyclists. Though trucks cause safety problems all over the city, they are a particular concern for Manhattan; according to data cited by DOT's recently released Manhattan Borough Safety Plan, trucks are involved in 25% of pedestrian fatalities in Manhattan, a far higher percentage than the rest of the city.

Unsafe commuting conditions are caused in part when trucks illegally deviate from designated truck routes in the city. According to data released by the Department of Transportation in 2007, which was the last comprehensive report on truck safety carried out by the department, we know that trucks are illegally deviating from their routes all too frequently. In fact, of the 2,389 collisions studied in that report, 35% occurred while a truck driver was operating off of a designated truck route. These are

collisions that could have been avoided had these trucks stuck to designated routes. I urge the NYPD to step up enforcement efforts against trucks that are illegally deviating off designated routes.

As anyone who crosses Canal Street on a routine basis knows all too well, trucks contribute to dangerous commuting environments even when they do stick to designated truck routes. Crossing the street along designated truck routes all too often leads to the death or serious injury of pedestrians or cyclists. On Canal Street alone, just this past fall, large motor vehicles struck and killed four pedestrians as they attempted to cross the street. Many more pedestrians and cyclists have had close encounters. This includes Council Member Chin, who has publicly mentioned her own close encounter with a truck while attempting to cross Canal Street.

I appreciate the efforts taken by DOT and the NYPD to address truck safety in the Manhattan Borough Safety Plan. There are several components of the Safety Plan geared towards improving the safety of pedestrians and cyclists as they relate to trucks, including: encouraging overnight deliveries; cracking down on double parking; and stepping up enforcement on trucks that fail to yield to pedestrians. Many of these actions will likely help improve safety conditions for all commuters in the Borough. There is some concern, however, that increasing off-hour deliveries could worsen the incidence of collisions due to increased driver fatigue. For this reason, the University Transportation Research Center has recently launched a project to study the impact of nighttime deliveries in New York City, and I encourage DOT to pay close attention to these findings as it considers expanding its Off-Hour Delivery program.

Additionally, more must be done to ensure that the trucks that are entering Manhattan are within the legal weigh limit and meet safety standards. Based on my own experience, I know commercial vehicles routinely ignore weight limits. In the 1980s, for instance, I conducted a survey of weigh stations for trucks entering Manhattan, and I believe that not one was complying with weight rules and regulations. I have little reason to believe much has changed in the 35 years since I initially conducted this survey. Overloaded trucks are therefore entering Manhattan on a daily basis, contributing to unsafe conditions and the degradation of our city's streets. Part of this problem is due to New York State's relatively lax weigh station regulations. While New York State has several fixed inspection and weigh stations, along with a system of random enforcement, many of our neighboring states have much stricter standards. In Connecticut, for instance, every single commercial motor vehicle is required to stop at weigh stations, while New Jersey requires any vehicle weighing 10,001 pounds or more to stop and be weighed. We should consider employing a similarly strict standard in New York to crack down on truckers entering Manhattan above legal weigh limits.

We should also be ensuring that trucks entering Manhattan are meeting additional safety standards, such as ensuring the proper quality and functioning of truck tires, brakes, and lights. We would ideally be ensuring these standards are being met by providing DOT and NYPD with dedicated resources to implement routine truck safety stops and inspections.

The volume of trucks entering our city each day is not only contributing to unsafe commuting environments, but other problems as well. For instance, our reliance on trucks worsens our city's terrible air pollution, which in turn causes New York to have one of the highest asthma rates in the country. Our reliance on trucks is also extremely inefficient, and harms our city's local economy. New York City, in fact, is the only major city in the world that is not connected to its country's national freight rail network. Lacking this infrastructure, we instead move goods by truck, which is much more expensive. In fact, moving goods just two miles from Manhattan to New Jersey can cost the same as transporting goods 500 miles or more in areas of the country that are better supported by rail.

To reduce our reliance on trucks, we should look towards alternative modes of transporting goods. I am a supporter, for instance, of the Cross Harbor Rail Freight Tunnel, championed by Congressmen Nadler, which would connect Brooklyn, Queens, Long Island, Westchester, and Southern Connecticut to the national freight rail grid. It is estimated that creating this tunnel would remove roughly 500,000 trucks from our congested streets each year, increasing safety and improving the delivery of goods. I join others in advocating for long-term solutions such as the Cross Harbor Rail Freight Tunnel, to help reduce our overreliance on trucks. While we secure the funding and political support to make this

tunnel a reality, however, we can also begin taking more trucks off our road by increasing freight delivery via float bridge systems. Transporting more of our freight via our waterways is something we can do immediately to help reduce the number of trucks in Manhattan.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify here today, and once again urge the Council to approve Intros 315 and 641. These bills will help bring much needed attention to the safety concerns posed by trucks, and help us gather necessary data to address these concerns.

## Hudson Square Connection

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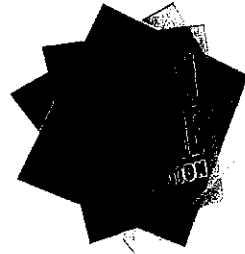
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March 3, 2014

### New York City Council Committee on Transportation Oversight – Trucks in New York City – How does truck traffic impact the safety of pedestrian and cyclists?



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#### Testimony Hudson Square Connection

Chair Rodriguez and members of the committee.

I am Renee Schoonbeek, Vice President for Planning & Capital Projects of the Hudson Square Business Improvement District. Hudson Square is roughly bounded by Houston and Canal Streets, Route 9A and Sixth Avenue and home to the Holland Tunnel. It is one of the priority areas identified in the Vision Zero Manhattan Pedestrian Safety Action Plan.

Hudson Square was once known as the Printing District. The buildings were built in the 1930s for manufacturing. At that time, an estimated 12,000 people worked in the district. Around the same time, the Holland Tunnel was built to accommodate 15 million vehicles per year. Today, the neighborhood is a hub of creative industries with a daytime population of 60,000 and the tunnel now moves 35 million vehicles per year. The number of cars has doubled and our daytime population has tripled; however our streets continue to be treated as a staging area for tunnel traffic.

On July 8<sup>th</sup> 2011 a young woman was hit by a truck in the crosswalk on Charlton Street and Sixth Avenue. She survived. Only six days later, on July 14<sup>th</sup>, a 60-year old woman, was struck by a truck and killed as she was crossing Canal Street at Hudson Street. A year later, on August 27<sup>th</sup> 2012, a 58-year old woman on a scooter was struck and killed by a flatbed truck turning from Houston Street onto Sixth Avenue. It may come as no surprise that Canal Street, Sixth Avenue and West-Houston Street are listed as priority corridors in the Vision Zero Action Plan.

The BID, working closely with Community Board 2 and DOT, is creating a more pedestrian-friendly environment. In February 2012, to support the City's enforcement, we started our own pedestrian traffic management program to keep traffic from blocking the crosswalks on Varick Street during rush hour. In October 2012, we launched our streetscape improvement project: a five-year, \$27M public-private partnership between the BID and the City that includes initiatives to improve pedestrian safety and calm traffic. A year later we started implementation and the project is now well underway.

One of our initiatives is the redesign of Hudson Street between Canal and Houston Streets that will reduce the overly wide travel lanes to standard width, leaving room to extent the western sidewalk 3 to 6 FT and create a



**Hudson Square Connection**

'linear park' (a series of small pocket parks), and will include a protected bike lane and planted pedestrian safety islands at the intersections.

However, the BID, alone, cannot address the impacts of a regional transportation facility on a neighborhood that is now alive with people.

We applaud the Committee's commitment to making our streets safer through better street designs, regulations and enforcement and look forward to working with you to expand these efforts.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on behalf of the Hudson Square community.

# JOINT COUNCIL No.16

## INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF TEAMSTERS



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**Transportation Committee Hearing:** How does truck traffic impact the safety of pedestrian and cyclists?

Tuesday, March 3, 2015

On behalf of the Teamsters Joint Council 16 and our 27 local unions representing 120,000 working men and women in New York, my name is Angel Martinez and I am a business agent at Teamsters Local 812.

I want to thank the chair of the committee, Councilmember Ydanis Rodriguez, for the opportunity to address the committee today.

The Teamsters Joint Council 16 represents members in a variety of industries that require the use of trucks. Sanitation trucks, heating oil trucks, concrete, liquor, food, packaging and, as at my local, beverage delivery trucks, the Teamsters are responsible for operating a great deal of the trucks that keep our city thriving and operating normally.

We take this responsibility very seriously. Our members work in one of the busiest and most densely populated cities in the world and thus they have to be prepared for those conditions. We are always working, and will continue to work, to ensure our members are aware of and follow truck routes.

In 2013, New York City Department of Transportation secretly placed tracking devices on trucks that service JFK, to see whether they stayed on designated truck routes as the law requires. Tracking over 4,000 trips in a three month period, DOT found that over 99% of trucks stayed on the freeways out of the city, and off local streets. The drivers had no idea they were even being studied.

I know it's easy to blame workers, to expect the worst, but the truth is we care about safety too. The Teamsters support Vision Zero because our members live in this city too. Our children play in these streets too. We want safe streets and will follow the law.

In order to be sure we are doing all we can to ensure safety on the roads for the public and our members, the Teamsters also have a number of programs centered on driver safety and awareness. The Joint Council 16 runs a class A driver's license preparedness programs, which includes real life experience in a truck. Local 282's trust fund offers defensive driving courses for members and also family members of union members, in an effort to make the roads safer as a whole. A number of employers, both union and non-union, also offer courses in driver safety for their truck drivers. At Local

812, we are now in the beginning of instituting a program for driver safety that will only further help make the roads safer for everyone.

We applaud the Council for examining ways to make the roads safer in New York City. We hope to work together as we look for additional ways to improve or change truck routes with the public's safety always in mind.

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I represent: NY Prints LLC

Address: 1105 44th Drive

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I represent: Manhattan Borough President

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Address: 180 VARICK STREET

I represent: HUDSON SQUARE B.I.D.

Address: 180 VARICK STREET

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Name: Kevin T. Kerman

Address: Deputy Commissioner, Fleet

I represent: DEA SMITH

Address: Municipal 53rd St, Suite 1

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Name: Ryan Russo

Address: Deputy Commissioner

I represent: NYC DOT

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

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Name: Stacey Hodge

Address: Director of Freight Mobility

I represent: NYC DOT

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

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Name: SARGIS MONTANA

Address: 205 26th St Apt 1201

I represent: Firefighters Local 812

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Name: Ed Pincak

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I represent: NYC DOT

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