

Testimony to New York City Council, Transportation Committee
By Martin Treat, representing The Clinton Hell's Kitchen Pedestrian Safety Coalition
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CHEKPEDS (Clinton Hell's Kitchen Pedestrian Safety Coalition) survey of our hundreds of coalition members shows that 75% fear for their safety because of traffic while only 6% fear for their safety because of crime.

A neighbor chose a faraway school she will have to drive to, because she is too afraid to walk 6 blocks with her children on 9th avenue every day to go to the local school" and afraid she should be : Holy Cross school is the second most dangerous to walk to in Manhattan!

It was in the summer of 2005 when, after five years serving on the Hell's Kitchen Neighborhood Association's Traffic Committee, I read the data from the City's Department of Transportation Summary Accident Report: the report showed a three-fold increase in crashes between vehicles and pedestrians (and bicyclists) on 9th Avenue and 42nd Street from 2002 to 2004. Moreover, when the Port Authority decided, with the consent of DOT, to redesign Ramp C between 36/37 Streets as a Highway access to Lincoln Tunnel, and add more highway traffic on 9th Avenue, our main street - crashes increased on these intersections.

This was avoidable: We vehemently opposed these measures, but did they listen? No, we are just the incompetent community residents and parents being killed on our way to work or to school.

The most dangerous intersections must be addressed without any delay with the help of Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer and our City Councilmember Christine Quinn, CHEKPEDS has brought together hundreds of various stakeholders to create a plan to calm the traffic and improve the quality of life on 9th Avenue.

We wish to share the results with the Council Transportation Committee and our first presentation is next Tuesday. It is a plan from the ground up not a scheme to increase traffic flow; it is a reflection of mixed use urban life that allocate the space and time democratically, to serve the majority of the population as well as EMS, deliveries and businesses. It is a plan born of all the taxpayers who fund 100% of our streets, but heretofore cannot use more than 20% of the space and still at the risk of injury or death. It is a **community driven plan** that incorporates all the best practices to calm traffic and protect pedestrians. This model is applicable to **all the most dangerous corridors**.

Only a few years back a tour bus cut down a fellow actor in my building as he was crossing 45 and 9th on the walk sign. The pedestrian has no right of way on the walk sign and do not ever believe you do. Drivers are merely ticketed when they kill pedestrians. And they can just drive away afterwards. When one of us called the precinct about a recent fatality, we were told that a contributing factor was that "the lady had an umbrella and was not looking at the oncoming cars." Never mind she was in a pedestrian crossing and had the walk sign. I am not blaming the police here; they were merely reading what their post crash reports ask for. In 67% of pedestrian crashes in New York City, the pedestrian is not at fault the driver is. When will New York City wake up to this tragic situation and stop blaming the victim? .. All needless deaths; It is time to take a stand, from a total absence of traffic enforcement, to skewed perception to weak laws exempting drivers from the most basic accountability. **Our society has sunk into lawlessness when it comes to drivers.**

CHEKPEDS will continue to build bridges between the ivory tower engineers and the common sense community, between the obsession to improve the flow and the obsession to save lives of children, senior citizens, workers, neighbors. In the conflict between human flesh and tons of moving metal, we count on you to help us make it alive to the other side of the avenue

Please accept our thanks for the opportunity to speak.