

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

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

- Pedestrian safety studies are updated regularly,
- Preventive and remedial plans are designed and implemented,
- Various agencies work in a coordinated fashion to reduce deadly crashes.
- Measurable information on the ultimate outcome: crashes and the efficiency of engineering and enforcement to eliminate them.

On a tactical level, asking DOT to normalize the traffic calming tool kit, to establish guidelines for its application and to communicate promptly on studies and conclusions will go a long way to apply transportation safety to all street users in a unified way.

We'd like to make the following suggestions:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Intro 376

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

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

Intro 374

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