



February 27, 2017

Matthew Driscoll
Commissioner
New York State Department of Transportation
50 Wolf Road
Albany, NY 12232

Dear Commissioner Driscoll:

We write to urge the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) to conduct a study on how to improve traffic safety along the West Side Highway from 72nd Street to the Battery in Manhattan.

The West Side Highway, which as you know is under your purview as a portion of State Route 9A (and is formally known as Joe DiMaggio Highway), has been the site of numerous crashes in recent months. On December 15, 2016, a cement truck struck and killed a cyclist while turning from West 55th Street onto the West Side Highway. On July 31, 2016, a young man was killed by a car while trying to cross the West Side Highway at 46th Street. On June 11, 2016, a cyclist was killed by a car turning from the West Side Highway onto Chambers Street. According to New York City crash data¹, at least one other vehicle passenger was killed and at least 206 other pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists were injured along this road in 2016.

These incidents and the data show the pressing need to improve safety on the West Side Highway. The New York City Department of Transportation (NYCDOT) has done an admirable job to improve traffic safety on this road by creating dedicated turn lanes and a Leading Pedestrian Interval at Horatio Street, among other measures, despite the fact that the West Side Highway is not under its control. Overall, however, the West Side Highway lacks many of the basic and innovative traffic calming devices and programs that are used across the city, such as narrower lanes, bulb-outs, speed cameras, red light cameras, greater use of Leading Pedestrian Intervals, appropriate pedestrian crossings, and Improved Driver Visibility.

Despite lacking many of these safety initiatives, the West Side Highway has become widely used by pedestrians and cyclists, especially due to the protected bike lane and revitalized spaces along the waterfront. Some observers have recently seen a noticeable increase in the volume of vehicles on the road, especially heading south, and existing turn lanes are unable to manage the traffic. Several large-scale projects are planned for the corridor in the coming years, including Pier 40, Pier 55, the so-called "SuperPier" at Pier 57 and residential

¹<http://www.visionzeroview.nyc/> - Injuries and deaths in 2016 updated 11/30/16.

development at the St. John's Terminal at 550 Washington Street. Therefore, even more pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles should be expected.

A combination of high multi-modal use and a lack of improved traffic safety measures is of great concern to us. As elected officials representing the neighborhoods alongside the West Side Highway, we urge NYSDOT to undertake a major study to identify appropriate actions to mitigate the high number of traffic incidents along this road.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important issue. Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact Tara Klein in Senator Hoylman's office at 212-633-8052.

Sincerely,



Brad Hoylman
State Senator



Jerrold Nadler
Congressmember



Gale A. Brewer
Manhattan Borough President



Daniel Squadron
State Senator



Marisol Alcantara
State Senator



Yuh-Line Niou
State Assemblymember



Deborah J. Glick
State Assemblymember



Linda B. Rosenthal
State Assemblymember



Richard N. Gottfried
State Assemblymember



Margaret Chin
City Council Member



Corey Johnson
City Council Member



Helen Rosenthal
City Council Member

cc: Polly Trottenberg, Commissioner, New York City Department of Transportation
Chris Hardej, New York Metropolitan Transportation Council