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COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN INTRODUCES LEGISLATION TO REQUIRE NEW VISION ZERO TRAFFIC STUDIES

Legislation Would Require NYC DOT To Conduct Recurring Studies on How City's Truck Routes and Tolling Policies Affect Pedestrian and Cyclist Safety

Today, Council Member Margaret Chin introduced new legislation aimed at further strengthening New York City's Vision Zero efforts to improve street safety and prevent pedestrian and cyclist fatalities.

The legislation ([Intro. 641](#)), which is co-sponsored by Council Transportation Chair Ydanis Rodriguez and Council Majority Leader Jimmy Van Bramer, would require the New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) to conduct recurring, comprehensive studies regarding pedestrian and cyclist safety along the city's truck routes.

Under the legislation, DOT would be mandated to conduct such a study every five years. Each study would require DOT to examine the impact of tolling policies on the city's network of truck routes, the prevalence of crashes and traffic violations along truck routes, and information regarding any safety measures implemented on such routes. In addition, DOT would be required to develop new strategies for increasing pedestrian and cyclist safety along truck routes.

Council Member Chin announced the introduction of the legislation today alongside representatives of Transportation Alternatives, the Move NY plan for toll reform and Families for Safe Streets, as well as leaders from community boards and business improvement districts within Council Member Chin's Lower Manhattan district.

New York City has more than 1,000 miles of truck routes, according to DOT.

Trucks make up 3.6 percent of the vehicles on city streets but account for 32 percent of cyclist fatalities and 12.3 percent of pedestrian deaths in collisions, according to statistics recently cited by the Mayor's office.

The last time DOT released any comprehensive study regarding truck routes was in 2007, under the previous mayoral administration — but there is currently no requirement or indication that DOT will undertake any new studies on this issue. In addition, the recurring studies proposed under Council Member Chin's legislation would include a broader focus by requiring that DOT also include the effect of tolling policies as a key element of the final report.

A major reason for Council Member Chin's legislation is that, while the current mayoral administration has done much work to advance the Vision Zero cause and improve street safety, the large arterial streets on which most major truck routes lie—such as Canal Street, in Council Member Chin's district—can still be extremely dangerous places for pedestrians and cyclists.

In 2014, two pedestrians were killed along Canal Street. One of those fatalities resulted from the pedestrian being hit by a private garbage truck.

Along with Canal Street, other major truck routes include large corridors like Queens Boulevard, Atlantic Avenue and Flatbush Avenue, which are also sites of longstanding concern regarding pedestrian and cyclist safety. The overall network also includes dozens of local truck routes that branch off of the larger corridors.

“The recurring studies required under this legislation could become a powerful new tool in our city’s Vision Zero effort,” **said Council Member Margaret Chin.** “With a comprehensive study of how our network of truck routes and tolling policies affect street safety—and with follow-up studies every five years—our city’s Department of Transportation would be in a better position to develop short- and long-term strategies to keep pedestrians and cyclists safe along these busy corridors. These new strategies would help lead the way toward smart fixes and broad reforms that could prevent injuries and save lives in the years to come.”

“Under Vision Zero, pedestrian safety and cyclist safety are of paramount concern for Mayor de Blasio, Speaker Mark-Viverito and myself. We at the Council are carefully considering how we can best keep our pedestrians and cyclists safe, while also allowing our trucks to move our products as swiftly as possible,” **said Council Member Ydanis Rodriguez, chair of the Council’s Committee on Transportation.** “I praise Council Member Chin’s legislation because with more knowledge about the safety implications of existing truck routes, we will be able to better target city resources toward preventing more deaths and achieving Vision Zero.”

“Under this legislation we will strengthen our city’s Vision Zero initiative by initiating a comprehensive and periodic study of our city’s truck routes,” **said City Council Majority Leader Jimmy Van Bramer.** “With the detailed data the Department of Transportation receives we will build on our city’s success of protecting all New Yorkers as well as ensure our residential streets and neighborhoods are safe from excessive and unruly truck traffic.”

“We need DOT to study these routes because trucks are a major hazard to pedestrians and cyclists,” **said Caroline Samponaro, deputy director of Transportation Alternatives.** “According to NYPD data, large commercial vehicles have been responsible for 30 deaths and more than a thousand injuries since July of 2012 alone. Nearly all the city’s truck routes are on arterial streets, wide corridors that make up only 15% of our total road network but which are the site of most traffic deaths and serious injuries. A DOT study would help the city as it moves forward with its pledge to rebuild these dangerous arterial streets, which cut through communities across the five boroughs.”

“Move NY strongly supports Council Member Chin’s effort to reduce fatalities and injuries caused by excessive numbers of trucks on our city streets,” **said Alex Matthiessen, campaign director for Move NY.** “As the Council member’s proposed legislation notes, our current tolling policies are one of the major causes of truck congestion in Lower Manhattan. Perversely, under our current scheme, the largest trucks save the most money by traveling through Chinatown and Downtown Brooklyn rather than using more direct routes on highways. By rebalancing the region’s tolls, and ending one-way tolling on the Verrazano Bridge, we can remove the financial incentive for trucks to clog our city streets, which should remain the exclusive domain of pedestrians, cyclists and light traffic.”

“Families for Safe Streets supports Council Member Chin’s legislation to require the DOT to study how trucking routes and tolling policies impact street safety,” **said Lindsay Motlin, an advocate with Families for Safe Streets.** “We are grateful for this effort to make our streets safer for all users, and we call on New York’s elected officials to follow this example. The thorough analysis proposed in this bill is an essential step toward the thoughtful redesign of NYC’s streets and the Vision Zero goal of eliminating traffic fatalities.”

“The streets of Community Board One—roads that anywhere else in the country would be called highways—are heavily used and remain a threat to pedestrians and cyclists,” **said Catherine McVay Hughes, chair of Manhattan Community Board 1.** “Roads which pass through CB1 and are also truck routes, like Canal Street, are of particular concern. Canal Street is a major east-west connector, with many unsafe crossing points, and is clogged many hours of the day, which raises the costs of doing business, increases air pollution and lowers the quality of life for residents, workers and visitors.”

“As a vulnerable community bearing the brunt of over 30 million vehicles a year on Canal Street, one of the city’s most heavily used truck routes, we welcome any analysis which can lead to improving street safety and reducing further pedestrian injuries and fatalities,” **said Wellington Chen, executive director of the Chinatown Partnership Local Development Corporation.** “Any study that can help reduce the casualties, the stress and the wear-and-tear on our main arterial roadways, such as Canal Street, is welcome news to this high-asthma rate community. We need to restore balance and equity and bring wellness to the forefront of our responsibility to sustainability and stewardship.”

“Large volumes of commercial truck traffic present serious challenges on the small and narrow streets adjacent to major arterial roadways throughout Lower Manhattan”, **said Tim Laughlin, executive director of the Lower East Side Business Improvement District.** “We look forward to working with relevant stakeholders to continue

improving pedestrian and cyclist safety and mitigate quality of life concerns associated with traffic congestion, so our community and local economy can continue to grow and prosper.”

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