



STATE OF NEW YORK
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
ALBANY, N.Y. 12232
www.nysdot.gov

STANLEY GEE
ACTING COMMISSIONER

DAVID A. PATERSON
GOVERNOR

May 2, 2010

Ms. Kate Slevin
Executive Director
Tri-State Transportation Campaign
350 West 31st Street, Suite 802
New York, NY 10001


Dear Ms. Slevin:

Thank you for your letter expressing concern about the number of pedestrian fatalities in Nassau and Suffolk Counties. Please be assured that the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) understands the seriousness of this issue. Pedestrian safety is a priority for NYSDOT and is one of the focus areas noted in our 2010 Draft Strategic Highway Safety Plan. NYSDOT's primary objective is to reduce pedestrian fatalities through engineering, enforcement and education. The draft plan is available on our website, www.nysdot.gov.

As you noted, the Safe Seniors program has been piloted in our Long Island region. Through the support of your organization, other advocacy groups, various governmental agencies and senior citizens, the region has developed an extensive list of pedestrian enhancements for a portion of Hempstead Turnpike (NY 24) in Nassau County and a segment of Main Street (NY 25) in Suffolk County. The regional staff looks forward to implementing many of them in 2010. The value of this program is recognized by NYSDOT and it will continue.

NYSDOT recently awarded a contract to install Pedestrian Countdown Timers at more than 900 crosswalks along State highways on Long Island to facilitate the safe crossing of pedestrians. It is important to note that this project will utilize American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding in order to expedite the installation of the timers.

Those aforementioned projects are just two of the many ways that pedestrian safety is being improved. In addition, NYSDOT has been upgrading sidewalk ramps to meet ADA standards, adding and upgrading pedestrian signals, increasing pedestrian signal crossing time and installing accessible pedestrian signals for sight impaired pedestrians.

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Pedestrian accommodations are important on all routes. NYSDOT's review of pedestrian fatality statistics, found that more than 50% of the fatalities are occurring off of the state highway system; therefore, I am pleased to advise you that the NYSDOT, in cooperation with the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council (NYMTC), has been able to set aside funding for the Local Safe Streets and Traffic Calming (LSSTC) program for 2010.

The LSSTC program began in 2000 to facilitate more walking and biking within communities. Through the LSSTC program, the regional NYSDOT office provides and administers federal funding for local governments within Nassau and Suffolk Counties to undertake infrastructure projects on roads under their respective jurisdictions to address perceived safety problems that present barriers to safe walking and bicycling. Since program inception, 32 LSSTC-funded projects across Long Island have made progress in expanding opportunities for safe walking and bicycling. These projects have constructed sidewalks, improved pedestrian crossings, added pedestrian signals and detector-activated flashing pedestrian signs, they have narrowed traffic lanes on local streets, added bicycle lanes, and constructed roundabouts.

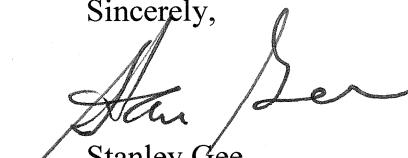
New projects will be selected by a committee of transportation experts comprised of representatives from NYMTC member agencies using established LSSTC selection criteria, which were approved by the Federal Highway Administration.

With regard to legislative efforts to approve a statewide "Complete Streets" policy, NYSDOT supports the intent of this policy and, in fact, has many initiatives underway that are consistent with a complete streets philosophy. For example, NYSDOT has issued a bicycle and pedestrian policy to promote safe, accessible and convenient pedestrian and bicycle travel for all persons on the state transportation system. The intent is to ensure that non-motorized transportation is a primary consideration in all stages of planning and project development. NYSDOT's GreenLites (Leadership in Transportation and Environmental Sustainability) in Design program also supports Complete Streets by awarding projects more credits for addressing sustainable practices, such as improving or creating bicycle and pedestrian facilities and improved connectivity. Also, NYSDOT has long considered community impacts as part of our context sensitive solution design process.

I trust you will see that we are committed to the effort and will continue to actively work with interested parties and local governmental agencies to address this issue.

Thank you for your support in this matter.

Sincerely,



Stanley Gee
Acting Commissioner