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Advocates Outline Transportation Priorities for a Sustainable City in 2013 and Beyond

In order to continue to advance sustainable transportation in New York City, a coalition of community, environmental and transportation advocates are coming together around a set of [transportation priorities](#) for the next mayoral administration. In advance of tomorrow's New York City [Mayoral Transportation Forum](#), the coalition stresses the need for investment in Select Bus Service; traffic safety; bicycle infrastructure; sustainable smart growth practices; accountability from NYC DOT; incentives for transit use; and increased City investment in transit.

Invest in Select Bus Service and launch more projects. While bus ridership has been stagnant around the city, Select Bus Service routes along Fordham Road, Bronx; 1st and 2nd Avenues and 34th Street, Manhattan, and Hylan Boulevard, Staten Island are attracting riders with speedier commutes. The next mayor should support Select Bus Service projects to LaGuardia Airport, Webster Avenue, Bronx, and Woodside, Queens while working to bring 10-15 new bus projects throughout the boroughs during the next administration.

Make streets even safer. Traffic deaths are preventable and are the number one cause of death for NYC children and number two for seniors. The next mayor should lead a public health revolution by recognizing that traffic deaths are a preventable crisis and take a data-driven approach to ending them. This can be done by building complete streets, reducing speed limits and increasing strategic traffic enforcement, using police officers and automated enforcement measures.

Support bike share, bike lanes and bicycling. The next Mayor should expand the bike share system citywide and continue building protected bike lanes and Greenways that make bicycling safe for New Yorkers of all ages and abilities in all five boroughs. There's broad support for bicycling in New York City: a half million New Yorkers bike at least a few times a month and 66 percent of New Yorkers think bike lanes are a "good idea." Bike infrastructure supported the 150 percent increase in cycling over the East River Bridges days after Superstorm Sandy when transit was not running and traffic congestion locked down streets. On top of that, streets with bike lanes are measurably safer for everyone, and bicycling boosts local business.

Be a champion for sustainability and smart growth. NYC is greener and more sustainable thanks to progress made towards environmental goals. The next mayor should focus on NYC DOT and NYC City Planning policies that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, discourage auto use, encourage environmentally sound economic growth, and make the City a better place to live. This includes supporting parking reform, the redesign of the Sheridan Expressway in the South Bronx, Play Streets, Neighborhood Slow Zones, and pop-up cafes and public plazas.

Ensure accountability from NYC DOT. NYC DOT should publish reports in English and other languages that simply explain how it is improving safety, sustainability, equity, and mobility. Reports should include updates to the Sustainable Streets Index, updates to pedestrian safety reports, and annual reports on bus speeds, ridership and implementation progress of bus rapid transit projects.

Encourage New Yorkers to take mass transit. As of January 2013, \$245 per month for transit can be exempted from taxes, to the financial benefit of both employer and employee. Hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers currently take advantage of this benefit, but hundreds of thousands are unaware that they and their employer are eligible. Legislation in the City Council would require employers of 50 or more to offer their workers these tax-free transit benefits.

Increase City Investment in Transit. The City invests only \$100 million in capital funds a year to the MTA's, and funds only one percent of the MTA's operating costs. The next Mayor should double the city's contribution to the MTA capital program to \$200 million a year, as was the case in the 1980s, and increase investment in operations, which would help reduce the burden on riders, who cover 53 percent of the MTA's operating costs. By comparison, in Boston, transit users cover only 38 percent, Chicago 44 percent, Los Angeles 27 percent, Philadelphia 37 percent, and Washington, D.C. 42 percent.

A detailed list of transportation priorities for a sustainable city in 2013 and beyond is available [here](#).

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The New York Public Interest Research Group is New York State's grass roots environmental organization and is directed by college students. Its mass transit project, the Straphangers Campaign, organizes and advocates for New York City subway and bus riders to win safe, affordable and reliable transit. www.nypirg.org www.straphangers.org.

Transportation Alternatives' mission is to reclaim New York City's streets from the automobile, and to advocate for bicycling, walking and public transit as the best transportation alternatives. www.transalt.org

Tri-State Transportation Campaign is a non-profit organization working toward a more balanced, transit-friendly and equitable transportation system in Connecticut, New York and New Jersey. www.tstc.org