



**Written Testimony of Ryan Lynch
Long Beach City Council
July 16, 2013**

My name is Ryan Lynch, and I am the associate director of the Tri-State Transportation Campaign, a non-profit transportation policy advocacy organization working to create a more balanced, environmentally friendly and equitable transportation system in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut. Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of Long Beach's proposed Complete Streets legislation and program being considered this evening.

Complete Streets are roads and bridges that are planned, designed and built with all users in mind, including pedestrians, cyclists, transit riders and motorists. Complete Streets policies and legislation have been enacted in Suffolk County, the Towns of North Hempstead, Hempstead, Babylon, Brookhaven, Islip and Southampton, and the Village of Great Neck Plaza. These local policies and laws complement and fill loopholes in the State Complete Streets Law, enacted in 2011 and in effect since early 2012.

In areas where complete streets implementation has taken place, the local economy and resident pocketbooks benefit:

- CEO's for Cities found that neighborhoods with high "Walk Scores" saw increased home values between \$4,000 and \$34,000;
- Surface Transportation Policy Project found that in vehicle dependent households, transportation costs are 20 percent higher than in households with Complete Streets;
- The UMASS-Amherst Political Economy Research Institute found that for every \$1 million invested, bicycling and pedestrian infrastructure projects created more jobs than road projects alone.

Long Beach understands the economic benefits of walkable communities from experience but adopting a formal complete streets policy is a natural next step in the City's efforts to create a safer, more walkable, bikeable and transit-accessible community. In many ways, Long Beach is leading the way on Long Island. Long Beach was a bike share pioneer in the region long before New York City's successful Citi Bike was launched, and Long Beach has been a destination for people from throughout Long Island who are looking for the walkable downtowns that are so few and far between on the Island. The numbers show that the City's efforts are working. According the United States Census, Long Beach has over double the percentage of bicycle commuters, nearly three times as many as people who walk to work and four times as many transit commuters as compared to the national average.

But more needs to be done to create the safe environments that create true transportation choice.

According to Tri-State's "Most Dangerous Roads for Walking" reports, the City of Long Beach has been the location of 7 pedestrian fatalities from 2009-2011, the most recent data available. These fatalities represent 8.3 percent of all pedestrian fatalities in Nassau County, despite Long Beach making up only 2.5 percent of the County's population. Enacting a City Complete Streets policy will help combat these needless fatalities, and institutionalize and prioritize the safety of all users of the road.

This is especially true in a community hit so hard by Super Storm Sandy, and one that remains vulnerable to the current and future threats of climate change. Adopting a Complete Streets policy will be another step towards the more robust walking, biking and transit infrastructure system the City needs to promote a multi-modal future, and a future that adds a level of resiliency and redundancy into Long Beach's transportation network.

Luckily we don't have to look far to see that when a City incorporates multiple transportation opens into its street infrastructure, that infrastructure will be utilized in everyday life and in times of crisis. From 2009-2011, bicycle ridership doubled in New York City, a year earlier than the City planned.

In the days following Super Storm Sandy, when much of New York City's transportation network was shut down, investments in safe bicycling and walking infrastructure allowed New York City's economy to get back up and running quicker than anticipated. New York City DOT found that on the Thursday following Sandy, bicycle ridership across the East River Bridges increased by 150 percent over a typical Thursday in November.

Long Beach could go even further in its proposed Complete Streets program by incorporating green infrastructure, like bio-swales and tree pits, into its walking, biking and traffic calming and complete streets infrastructure. Doing so will not only create the safe street designs that encourage biking, walking and transit use, but also create infrastructure that helps with stormwater management and mitigates flooding.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of the establishment of a Complete Streets program and policy for the City of Long Beach.

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