



Testimony of Ryan Lynch, Tri-State Transportation Campaign
Nassau County Public Works Committee

July 29, 2013

My name is Ryan Lynch, and I am the Associate Director and Long Island Coordinator for Tri-State Transportation Campaign, a non-profit organization working toward a more balanced, environmentally-friendly and equitable transportation system in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of a resolution to adopt a complete streets policy for Nassau County and thank you to County Executive Mangano and legislative leaders who have long supported Complete Streets initiatives for working to develop this policy and put it up for discussion.

A Complete Streets policy would design and build roads with all users in mind, pedestrians, cyclists, transit users and motorists. This resolution will go a long way towards mitigating preventable fatalities and accidents along county roads, while also encouraging increased transportation choices for Nassau County's residents. Roads in Nassau County are some of the most dangerous for pedestrians and cyclists in the region. From 2009-2011, 84 pedestrians were killed in Nassau, with a disproportionate number of those pedestrians over 60 years of age. In fact, Nassau County is the fifth most dangerous county for adults over 60 years of age.

Safer options for walking and biking would give Nassau County residents real transportation choice in determining how to conduct their day to day business. These options allow residents to leave their cars at home if they want, reducing congestion on Nassau County roads and improving the County's environment, while also allowing people to get some exercise in the process. But beyond the public health and environmental benefits of complete streets, complete streets are also economic development drivers. 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.

Tri-State supports this resolution and urges its adoption by the committee and ultimately the full legislature. If adopted, this policy would be the second countywide policy adopted in the downstate region. While Nassau County will be only the second countywide policy in the downstate region, there have been seven town and municipal policies adopted on Long Island and New York State adopted a complete streets policy last year. However, local municipal, town and county policies are integral because the state policy only applies to projects that are funded with both state and federal dollars. Adopting a county complete street policy fills the gap in projects that may be funded entirely with county dollars.

We do believe the proposed policy can be strengthened, however. Inserting language that would require high level officials, like the Commissioner of Public Works or the County Executive, to sign off on any projects that specifically omit complete streets treatments will create an added level of accountability in the policy.

Nevertheless, the Tri-State Transportation Campaign supports the County's efforts to adopt this Complete Streets policy and encourages the committee to work with County leaders in the future to strengthen the language further. We applaud and support the County's efforts to improve safety for all road users.

Thank you.