



**Testimony of Transportation Alternatives
Before the New York State Assembly Ways and Means Committee and Senate
Finance Committee, February 6, 2022**

Good afternoon Chairs Krueger, Weinstein, Kennedy, and Magnarelli and committee members. Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Elizabeth Adams, and I am the Senior Director for Advocacy & Organizing at Transportation Alternatives. For nearly 50 years, Transportation Alternatives has been a leader in the fight to make our streets safer and livable for all New Yorkers.

Today, TA urges the New York State legislature to increase funding for Complete Streets projects, approve Sammy's Law and pass the full SAFE Streets Act, and support public transportation and funding for the MTA.

We commend Governor Hochul on her commitment to new infrastructure investment in the proposed FY 24 budget, however, it is critical that the state budget also include deeper investments to combat New York's street safety crisis, and provide municipalities with the local tools they need to respond to unprecedented levels of traffic violence.

This epidemic impacts hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers each year, costing the State \$15 billion annually¹, and resulting in the death of three New Yorkers every day.² It is in the interest of New York's fiscal and community wellbeing to address this crisis.

We are at a turning point. New York is receiving billions of dollars in federal infrastructure funding for large scale transportation projects and now is the time to invest in a more sustainable and mobility-accessible future for all New Yorkers.

More funding for Complete Streets projects

Complete streets funding helps localities across New York to tap into state dollars to make roadway improvements that support road access for all users, whether they walk, bike, drive, or use public transit. We are pleased to see the increased support for comprehensive street design that accounts for the safety and efficiency for all road users And we urge the state legislature to put safety at the forefront of its budget priorities and increase funding for Complete Streets.

¹ U.S. Department of Transportation, State by State Crash Data and Economic Cost Index, available at <https://www.transportation.gov/research-and-technology/state-state-crash-data-and-economic-cost-index>

² U.S. Department of Transportation, Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS), available at www-fars.nhtsa.dot.gov/States/StatesCrashesAndAllVictims.aspx

Transportation Alternatives recommends NYS DOT adopt a fair share approach to increasing complete streets funding for NYS street design projects and ensure funding for new projects advances lower transportation emissions metrics in line with the state's climate change requirements.

Improved infrastructure is a means to safety, and budgets are moral documents. Complete streets redesigns are proven to reduce serious injuries and fatalities by as much as 30% after implementation. More funding for Complete Streets projects can help localities take on more transit-oriented and safe streets projects that make sense for their communities. Shifting away from car-centered design addresses our traffic and climate crises.

Complete streets are an investment in the wellbeing of New Yorkers, reducing traffic violence, improving public health, and building a sustainable future. Complete streets projects are exactly what the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) should fund: they are projects that we know significantly reduce vehicle emissions and make it possible for people to get around more sustainably. TA thanks Governor Hochul for including in the proposed budget \$7 million for Complete Streets projects and encourages the State to commit additional funding, as well as pass the Complete Streets Maintenance bill in the final state budget.

Climate emergency

Vehicles are the second largest contributor to emissions, and any plan for climate must center and address transportation. We won't be able to meet the state's climate mandates as defined in the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA) if we don't take urgent and bold action to reduce mobility emissions.

To that end, Transportation Alternatives calls for the reduction of the annual vehicle miles traveled within the state by 30% by 2035, [following other state models](#), and the creation of a [Vehicle Mileage Tax](#). The benefits of VMT reduction are multifold. A multi-modal future gives New Yorkers options. VMT reduction is indicative of safe, walkable, and bikeable communities that encourage folks to make use of public space and robust bus and transit systems, and improved air quality and lowered rates of pollution from vehicle traffic.

Sammy's Law

TA further urges the State legislature to pass Sammy's Law (S2422, Hoylman-Sigal) in the FY '24 budget. Sammy's Law will grant New York City greater authority over its own speed limits, and will save lives. Lower speed limits are proven to reduce fatalities and serious injuries. 72 percent of New Yorkers said they want New York City to determine its own safe speed limits, which will help NYC more efficiently make safety improvements on its own roads. We applaud the Governor for including the legislation in the proposed executive budget and urge the Legislature to include the bill in each of its respective budget responses.

Sammy's Law is supported by the NYS Safe Streets Coalition, which comprises over 100 organizations across the states and of which Transportation Alternatives is a founding member.

Public transportation funding, automated enforcement, & fair fares

We applaud the government's investment in public transportation and commitment to funding the MTA as a lifeline for our communities.

We support the recommendations put forth by Reinvent Albany to address MTA financial needs and encourage the Legislature to examine all funding options to ensure the MTA is fully funded in the budget.

Congestion pricing must also be implemented quickly without further delay and the MTA must receive its full congestion pricing revenue in capital plan funds. Congestion pricing is the largest funding source for the 2020-2024 capital program at \$15B and is essential to the future of our public transportation system.

Expanding the authority of the MTA and NYC to add cameras for bus lanes (Article VII TED Proposal – Part A) will help buses run faster and more safely, making it easier and more efficient for people to get around.

This action should be paired with removing the sunset clause of the ABLE (automated bus lane enforcement) program to ensure governments and organizations no longer need to repeatedly ask the state for continued approval of a successful program.

We also recommend the Governor and Legislature work with the City of New York to expand its Fair Fares program and increase the Fair Fares income threshold.

TA thanks the Committees for their time and attention to prioritizing transportation as a vector of creating safe and sustainable communities, and we once again urge the New York State legislature to increase funding for Complete Streets projects, approve Sammy's Law, and support public transportation and the MTA.

Sincerely,

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