

12/2/2016

The Honorable Bill de Blasio  
Mayor, City of New York  
City Hall  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Mayor de Blasio:

I hope this letter finds you well.

I want to first congratulate you on New York City's recent distinction as the "2016 Best Smart City." With the numerous cutting-edge initiatives pioneered by your administration—from Urbantech NYC to the Connected Vehicle Pilot to the Call for Innovation challenge—this accolade is well-deserved.

It is in that same spirit of innovation that I write today, to inspire your imagination with an opportunity to leverage technology to improve the lives of all New Yorkers. In 2014, the popular navigation app Waze launched a free, data exchange initiative with local governments around the world. The principal objective of the effort, dubbed the Connected Citizens Program, is to harness the power of traffic data to improve cities.

Cities partnering with Waze gain access to relevant traffic data from millions of monthly users. In exchange, they send Waze data about planned street closures, road repairs, and other information they would like to get directly to drivers. Initially, local governments used Waze data primarily to improve traffic management and address congestion. In time however, the data was employed to enhance public safety, emergency management and crisis response.

The following case studies illustrate the game-changing potential of the Connected Citizens Program:

- Real-time reports of crashes by Waze users enabled cities to significantly cut down their emergency response times.
- When Hurricane Matthew hit the east coast in October, Waze provided up-to-date information on flooded and blocked roads and local governments delivered shelter locations directly to drivers.
- Washington D.C. incorporated user data into its "Potholepalooza" campaign to repair thousands of potholes within 48-hours of initial reports.
- Cities, such as Los Angeles and Boston, have significantly reduced traffic congestion, addressed dangerous road conditions, and improved mobility generally.

As a true twenty-first century city, New York can take a partnership with Waze to unprecedented heights. Real-time, user-generated data could be the pivotal tactic to realize Vision Zero's mission of eliminating traffic fatalities. In fact, the NYPD scratched the surface of such a partnership when it teamed up with Waze to inform drivers of the City's new twenty-five mile per hour speed limit. As you likely know, this temporary partnership successfully reduced speeds and crashes.



At the same time, the City would be empowered to both improve mobility within Manhattan, its economic core, and reach outer-boroughs which face their own unique transportation challenges. The promising potential of alleviating the harmful health, economic, and environmental impact of traffic congestion, on its own, merits our consideration of a data partnership with Waze.

I recognize that Waze and the DOT have long been in contact about the Connected Citizens Program. Given the complexity of data sharing arrangements—especially in a city of over 8.5 million—it is understandable that a mutually beneficial agreement has not yet been reached.

If a city-wide effort is impracticable at this time, I propose that Staten Island pilot the data sharing partnership to develop a template. It is already well-established that Staten Island residents face one of the longest commutes in the country on average. According to a recent report, Staten Island has 1.6 vehicles per household—the largest ratio in the city by far. That at least partially explains the pervasiveness of traffic fatalities in the borough, notwithstanding the implementation of Vision Zero policies.

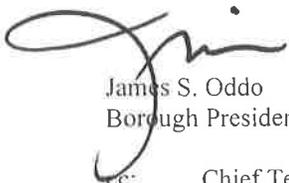
Considered in combination, Staten Island is the ideal laboratory for the Connected Citizens Program. And as economic development projects take shape across the borough, there is no better time than the present to pursue such a partnership.

I ask for your help in bringing together key members of your team for a technical meeting to chart a course forward. I am willing to do whatever is required to make this partnership happen.

It is my hope that this letter has sparked your interest, given the potential for measurable impact that the Connected Citizens Program offers New York City—and Staten Island specifically.

Thank you for your time, courtesy and consideration.

Very truly yours,



James S. Oddo  
Borough President

cc: Chief Technology Officer Miguel Gamiño Jr.  
Chief Analytics Officer Dr. Amen Mashariki  
DOT Commissioner Polly Trottenberg  
DoITT Commissioner Anne Roest