

January 10, 2017

The Honorable Polly Trottenberg  
Commissioner  
NYC Department of Transportation  
55 Water Street, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10041

Re: Anti-speeding campaign proposal

Dear Commissioner Trottenberg:

I hope this letter finds you well.

I am writing to present an innovative proposal that could equip us with a new tool to combat the pervasive speeding problem on Staten Island and across New York City.

As you may know, in the last three years at Borough Hall, we've launched numerous public service campaigns, including efforts to demonstrate the negative effects of littering, to convince women of the importance of regular screening mammograms, and to teach young people the consequences of excessive consumption of sugary drinks. I believe a public service campaign designed to discourage speeding, while admittedly different than any that have been tried in our city, can work.

The idea is to install variable-message signage to educate drivers that speeding results in time savings that are by and large inconsequential or negligible, and I would like to volunteer Staten Island as the ideal borough to pilot this effort

Strategically placed signs along key roadways, such as Hylan Boulevard, for example, would calculate and display estimated arrival times to major intersections for two options: 1) if driving the speed limit given current traffic conditions 2) if driving substantially above the speed limit. Drivers will see that the nominal differences between ETAs are simply not worth risking a life or getting summoned for speeding.

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I believe the speeding epidemic is largely driven by this false notion that speeding will get you to your destination much quicker than observing the speed limit.

The campaign is designed to *nudge*, rather than punish, behavior so that it is in line with individual and social well-being. Given that behavioral research suggests that people are much more motivated to avoid choices that they perceive might cause losses than they are to adopt choices that promise savings, this approach is specifically crafted to show drivers that abiding by the speed limit won't cost them time or money. In other words, we want to prove to drivers that their intention to avert loss by speeding is ineffective and therefore, unnecessary.

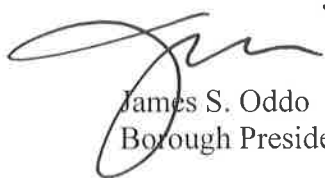
Initially, this campaign will complement Vision Zero and Mayor de Blasio's desire to eliminate traffic-related fatalities city-wide. The ideal scenario is that a pilot effort on Staten Island could be scaled to become a cost-effective component to Vision Zero. A behavioral approach added to the existing toolkit might help the City reduce its reliance on punitive enforcement which has fueled significant public resentment, especially on Staten Island.

I acknowledge that my proposal is out-of-the-box and therefore, may be met with skepticism. But eliminating all traffic-related fatalities in the City is a Herculean effort which will require open-mindedness, innovation, and experimentation.

Therefore, I ask for your help in bringing together key members of your team to discuss the feasibility of this proposed public service campaign and other Vision Zero-related efforts on Staten Island.

Thank you for your kind attention, and I hope to hear from you soon

Sincerely,



James S. Oddo  
Borough President

cc: Borough Commissioner Thomas Cocola, NYC DOT