



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Shirley L. Huntley

Complete Streets/Smart Growth

SHIRLEY L. HUNTLEY June 23, 2010

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News From Senator Shirley L. Huntley

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SENATE PASSES BLUEPRINT FOR A SMARTER SAFER NEW YORK INFRASTRUCTURE

(D-Jamaica) Senator Shirley L. Huntley along with her colleagues in the Senate Democratic Majority have developed a blueprint (Complete Streets/Smart Growth) for safer roads and highways across the state, which will also enact cost savings for municipalities and improve the quality of life for all New Yorkers.

The Complete Streets/Smart Growth legislative package ensures that all transportation improvements made throughout the State have to be designed to improve safety, access and mobility for all travelers, regardless of age or ability. Bicycle and pedestrian accommodations also have to be included in the planning and development of state, county and local transportation facilities, plans and programs. Some of these improvements include wider roads, paved shoulders which would accommodate bicyclists, pedestrian control

signalization, bus pull outs, curb cuts, raised crosswalks and ramps and various other traffic calming measures.

This legislation package could not have arrived at a better time taking into account the recent social, economical, and political climate. In a time where 60 percent of New Yorkers are obese or overweight, gas prices and unemployment remain high; this legislation will serve as a sort of remedy. It will combat obesity, unemployment and the issue of gas prices simultaneously. It will encourage individuals, for reasons related to health to financial savings, to take advantage of this new transformation. Not only that, but it will allow everyone a chance to become an eco-friendly individual by helping to reduce the carbon footprint.

This piece of legislation will aid in the fight to decrease the unemployment rate in New York as well. These new constructions projects that will be undertaken will give rise to vast opportunities for thousands of unemployed individuals. This blueprint will not only transform New York into a greener and commuter friendly state, but it will also help the economy.

The senator also noted that the state's aging infrastructure continues to place drivers, pedestrians and other frequent users of our transportation system in danger, particularly seniors. According to a national report titled *Dangerous by Design* issued in 2009, New York State had the 3rd highest number in the nation for pedestrian fatalities per 100,000 people aged 65 and older, behind Hawaii and California.

The report also showed these statistics:

- 1 in 5 traffic deaths in New York State are pedestrians.

- 22.5 percent of total traffic deaths in New York State are pedestrians. The national average was 11.8 percent in 2007-2008.
- 31 percent of total traffic deaths in the NYC metropolitan area are pedestrians.

The environmentally and pedestrian-friendly package also establishes a State Smart Growth Public Infrastructure Policy Act which outlines requirements for state infrastructure agencies (Department of Transportation, the Department of Education, the New York State Housing Finance Agency, the Housing Trust Fund Corporation, the Environmental Facilities Corporation, the Dormitory Authority, and the New York State Urban Development Corporation). These agencies will have to ensure that public funding is granted for construction projects which use, maintain or improve existing infrastructures and protect natural resources. New construction projects will also have to adhere to smart growth principles.

“New York’s infrastructure needs not only an upgrade, but to be developed in a way that makes sense for the demands of the 21st Century,” said Senator Huntley. “Commonly known as ‘Smart Growth’, our plans are a win-win for all New Yorkers. Smarter design of new and existing infrastructures will bring greater foot traffic to local businesses, reduce occurrences of pedestrian and cyclist accidents, allow seniors and others to get needed exercise and reduce our dependence on automobile gasoline.” A healthy New York means a happy New York.