

# MEAN STREETS



WHO IS  
RESPONSIBLE FOR  
TRANSPORTATION  
SAFETY??

Road safety is a hot topic with the mayor kicking off the new Vision Zero project, a plan to reduce traffic fatalities to zero. But with bikes, cars, pedestrians, and buses all competing for New York's streets, how can we avoid fatal accidents? Where do we start?

In the Spring of 2014, Ms. Boroda's Urban Studies class at the Academy of Urban Planning, along with CUP teaching artist Aaron Reiss set out to explore transportation safety in New York City. They looked at the Myrtle/Wyckoff intersection in Bushwick and saw a lot of unsafe things going on. They wanted to find out how to change things.

The class interviewed representatives of advocacy groups, people on the street, a Community Board representative, and staff from the Department of Transportation (D.O.T.) to find out who is in charge of transportation safety.

THE FIRST LINE OF DEFENSE IN TRANSIT SAFETY ARE THE TRAFFIC SIGNS, LIGHTS, AND MARKERS THAT LET YOU KNOW HOW TO BEHAVE SAFELY IN THE STREET.



BUT JUST ONE LOOK AT THE INTERSECTION OF MYRTLE AND WYCKOFF, AND IT'S CLEAR THAT SIGNS ARE NOT ENOUGH.



*There are plenty of unsafe things going on in the streets in our neighborhood.*

*We made this booklet to share what we learned!*



**NO BIKE LANE**



# WHAT'S GOING ON AT THE MYRTLE/WYCKOFF INTERSECTION?

There are 6 streets feeding into this intersection, one of the most dangerous in the city. These are some problems we found:

FADED STREET MARKINGS

CROSSING WITH NO CROSSWALK

BUSY BUS DEPOT

HIDING BEHIND THE PILLARS IN MIDDLE OF THE STREET

FAILURE TO YIELD

CROSSING WITHOUT A GREEN LIGHT

NOT PAYING ATTENTION IN THE STREET

"They should make the U-turn from Myrtle onto Wyckoff illegal. It's too sharp, they can't see who's on the other street."  
*-Ahay! (resident of Eyew)*

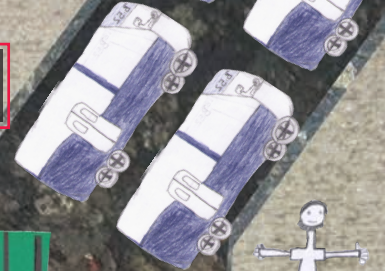
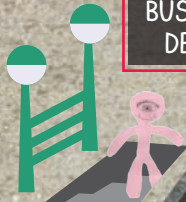
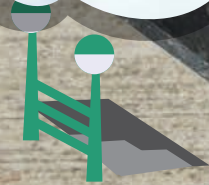
"It seems like a pretty silly set up - I never know when to walk. I certainly think it should be changed."  
*- Rosie (resident of 30 years)*



MYRTLE AVE

PALMETTO ST

WYCKOFF AVE



# EDUCATION

So, what can be done to make things safer?

THE MAJOR WAYS TO MAKE TRANSIT SAFER ARE WHAT WE CALL "THE 3 E'S"



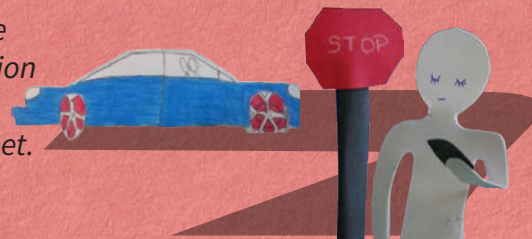
- Miller Nuttle  
(Transportation Alternatives)



"Education about how to behave safely is a big piece; it starts in the schools and at home. If we learn how to behave safely we can prevent most accidents and deaths."

- Nadine Whitted  
(Community Board 4)

*Problem:* People don't pay attention while they are crossing the street.



*Solution:* Create and display public service announcements — posters to educate the public about important issues — to let people know how dangerous it is to text and walk or drive.

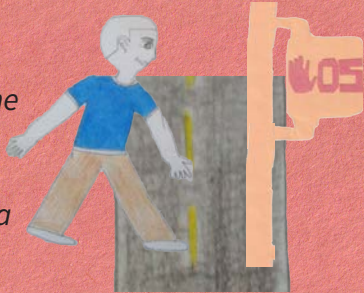


# ENFORCEMENT

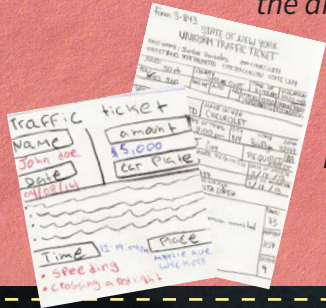


The police can write tickets with high fines to stop bicyclists from running red lights, drivers from speeding, and pedestrians from jay-walking, among many other unsafe activities.

**Problem:** Since it takes so long for the light to change, a lot of people cross the street without a green “walk” light.



**Solution:** Have police increase the amount of tickets and warnings they give to people who cross against the light at Myrtle/Wyckoff.

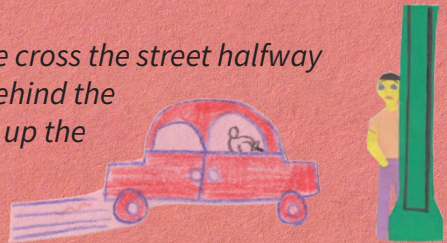


# ENGINEERING

Changing the street and what's on it – like adding a bike lane, taking out a left turn sign, or making curbs and crosswalks bigger – are all engineering.



**Problem:** People cross the street halfway and then stop behind the pillars that hold up the subway tracks.




**Solution:** Build a little island around the pillars. That way, pedestrians have a safe place to wait and drivers know to avoid that part of the street.



Flip the page to see the process for actually changing the street!




# HOW DO WE START THE PROCESS OF CHANGING THE STREET?



Once you decide that you want to make a change, this is how you start!

## Call 311

For basic fixes like faded street markings or a broken stop light, 311 will take your info and let you know when the issue is resolved.



"What if 311 doesn't work?"



"But what if the Community Board doesn't agree with me?"

## Talk to your Community Board


Tell them about what you want to change and why. Your local Community Board can help amplify your voice to get the D.O.T. to make changes.

then it's time to...


## Get some help from non-profit organizations

These groups help you gain support from your local Community Board.

then you should...



Community Boards have the ear of the government



"We need you guys!"

**Community Boards** are made up of 50 local volunteers, they act as advisors to local government. They cannot make or enforce laws.

- Nadine Whitted (Community Board 4)

**Non-profit organizations** like *Right of Way* and *Transportation Alternatives*

work to make transit safer. They are activists who have a lot of knowledge, help, and a wide reach.

Contact them directly for help.

- Keegan Stephan (*Right of Way*)



"People are the most important thing for affecting social change. It's about mobilizing enough people to believe it's a serious problem and needs to be addressed. Then we will see change."



**Keep the pressure on until change is made!**

At this point, you are waiting on the D.O.T. Lots of things can slow them down (money, trouble from businesses, etc.) but you can keep going to Community Board meetings, working with non-profit organizations, and voicing your support.

then...

"What if nothing gets done?"

\$\$\$  
D.O.T. has the money

And does the building

"Community support is key for our projects."

The D.O.T.) are the doers in the city government. They are going to build the bike lane, put in the speed bump, and change the speed limit.

- Kim Wiley-Schwartz (NYC D.O.T.)



Non-profits can help build community support for your cause



They use petitions,

...and more, to make changes



...and protests,

once you get Community Board support, they will...

**Forward your request to the D.O.T.**

Once the D.O.T. has support from your Community Board, they will investigate the issue and then make a plan to address it. That plan will go back to the Community Board for approval. If they agree, the D.O.T. will make that change.

# WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR TRANSPORTATION SAFETY?

## CUP

Teaching artist: Aaron Reiss

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Project support: Valeria Mogilevich

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**Classroom teacher:** Yelena Boroda

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The **Center for Urban Pedagogy (CUP)** is a nonprofit organization that uses the power of design and art to increase meaningful civic engagement particularly among historically underrepresented communities. To learn more about CUP, visit [welcometoCUP.org](http://welcometoCUP.org)

**City Studies** is a program of the Center for Urban Pedagogy. CUP partners with public high schools and afterschool programs on project-based curricula that use design and art as tools to research the city.

The **Academy of Urban Planning (AUP)** is a public school in Bushwick with an urban planning theme-based curriculum. To learn more, about AUP visit [aupnyc.org](http://aupnyc.org)

