

www.transalt.org

127 west 26th street
suite #1002
New York, NY 10001

212 629 8080 telephone
212 629 8334 fax



Your advocate for bicycling,
walking and public transit

Board of Directors

Neysa Pranger
Walter Hook
Kenneth Coughlin
Laurie Falk
Davidowitz
Colin Beavan
Christine Berthet
Daniel Kaizer
Richard Kassel
Laurence W. Levi
Steve McMaster
Jeff Prant
Kate Slevin
Paul Steely White

Advisory Council

Marc Agger
Thurstan Bannister
George H. Beane
Majora Carter
Ramon Cruz
Joshua David
Mark Gorton
Alex Herzan
Mary Beth Kelly
Robert Kotch
Peter Meitzler
Matthew Modine
Lisa Sladkus
Dr. Harold Varmus
Adam Wolfensohn

June 29, 2009

New York City Council, Consumer Affairs Committee: Pedicab Regulation

Statement of Caroline Samponaro, Director of Bicycle Advocacy, Transportation Alternatives.
Transportation Alternatives (T.A.) is a 7,500 member 501(c)(3) non-profit, non-partisan advocacy organization working for better biking, walking and public transit in New York City.

Good morning Chairman Comrie, Speaker Quinn and members of the Consumer Affairs Committee. My name is Caroline Samponaro, and I am the Director of Bicycle Advocacy for Transportation Alternatives, New York City's advocates for biking, walking and sensible transportation.

Transportation Alternatives is a longtime supporter of pedicabs and believes any laws, rules or regulations promulgated by the City of New York to regulate them should encourage their use, not limit it. With political, planning, development, economic, health and environmental discussions increasingly focusing on New York City's growth over the coming decades and how to accommodate more people, jobs and development into our already crowded city, it only makes sense for City policies to encourage pedicabs and other modes of transportation that do not pollute or contribute to traffic congestion.

While there has been agreement for the need to regulate pedicabs, there is no need to restrict where they may operate. The City Council, the Administration and others have not produced any evidence that pedicabs have a negative effect on the city, traffic, public safety, the economy, the environment or on public health. In fact, pedicabs help improve many of these things.

Transportation Alternatives opposes a ban of pedicabs from bike lanes. On NYC's automobile clogged streets, bike lanes provide safety for pedicabs as much as they do for cyclists. Transportation Alternatives has shifted away from debating whether the width of bike lanes can accommodate the demand, and towards discussing progressive re-appropriation of street space to accommodate the growth of human powered transport. If there is even a possibility that there are bike lanes that are not wide enough to meet the demand of travel, then we should not be looking to ban tricycles but rather to expand the bike lanes and move toward world class streets that have both the environment and safety in mind.

Transportation Alternatives is opposed to any restrictions on a pedicab's right to travel over bridges. Riding over bridges allows owners to ride their pedicab from garages in Brooklyn or Queens into the Central Business District.

(Over)

A ban on bridge crossings would put an unfair burden on owners and potentially lead to the use of motorized vehicles to transport pedicabs into and out of the CBD.

Transportation Alternatives is opposed to a ban of pedicabs from midtown during the winter holiday season. Policies should be enacted to discourage private automobile use during this time, not to ban the most space efficient and flexible option we have to move people with zero environmental impact. The movement of a small minority via private automobiles should not be protected at the expense of a non-polluting and practical transportation option that can serve many. Blaming pedicabs for congestion in midtown is akin to blaming a problem on its solution. A ban would also negatively impact the industry and deprive hundreds of people of green jobs during the lucrative holiday season.

Pedicabs are city-friendly pollution-free vehicles. They are good for the environment and the health and quality of life of New Yorkers, they help people quickly get where they need to go, and they are a unique part of New York, endearing the city to tourists and New Yorkers alike. We hope that this Committee and the City Council will continue to work with the pedicab owners' association, pedicab operators association, and advocates to promulgate regulations that help establish and legitimize this growing trade.

Thank You