

## Searchlight: Council Passes Commercial Bike Legislation

Posted on Oct 11, Posted by [Administrator](#) Category [City](#)

The City Council wants to force businesses to mind the safety of employees who use bikes for their jobs.

Speaker Christine Quinn announced earlier today that the Council would pass a package of legislation aimed at the commercial bicycling sector.

Transportation committee chairman James Vacca, who championed the bills, told Gotham Gazette last month following a hearing on the legislation that commercial bicyclists — pizza deliverers, messengers — sometimes endanger pedestrians and themselves in their effort to make a buck.

"I think that even the most enthusiastic of workers has to understand that life and limb is the priority," he said. "We can't have any pedestrians endangered. Many of them are elderly, many of them are children."

Streetsblog, which has avidly covered the subject, [describes the legislation](#) and what's being done so far:

Together, the legislative package would create civil penalties for what had until now been criminal offenses, extend enforcement authority to DOT in an effort to ensure compliance by employers, tighten requirements for reflective vests, and mandate bike safety courses for commercial cyclists. The bills do not address moving violations, such as riding on the sidewalk or riding the wrong way.

DOT has created a six-person commercial cycling unit to ensure that employers are properly

educating and outfitting their employees. The agency says it has visited 2,640 businesses and hosted events for 900 delivery cyclists in Manhattan. Currently, the unit is visiting restaurants and providing education materials, focusing first on the West Side and expanding to the East Side, Lower Manhattan and Sunset Park by the end of the year. Starting in January, the unit will issue citations to employers who are violating the laws.

In his comments to Gotham Gazette in September, Vacca called the size of the DOT's six-person commercial cycling unit "inadequate."

"We want to get serious about this issue," he said after a hearing on the legislation. "I do not think that it will have the impact I'm looking for."

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