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Fatal Distraction

So it looks like the City DOT's great emphasis on plazas and street lane reductions made an impact – but not as intended. As reported in today's [Times](#), traffic fatalities significantly **increased** through the end of the last fiscal year (ending this past June) to 291, up from 236.* The data comes from the City, revealed in the most recent [Mayor's Management Report](#) (MMR). Incredulously, City DOT places the blame on pedestrians rather than look again at its emphasis on its confusing lanes, including cars crossing bike lanes and cars parking in the middle of the street WHICH causes confusion where there was none before; it also needs to look at bikers who flaunt rules, not just delivery bikers. Past DOT administrations implemented measures to address traffic safety concern. Witness the gates that direct pedestrians crossing Queens Boulevard to controlled intersections introduced under then-commissioner Iris Weinshall.

Rather than focus on plazas and lane closings that re-direct traffic, perhaps the current DOT administrators need to focus on safety first. Before the last two years, the City had already installed hundreds of miles of bike lanes. Ever hear of the straw that breaks the camel's back; perhaps the DOT erred; certainly those decisions merit a review. The chair of the City Council's transportation Committee agrees (as reported in [The Times](#)):

“Certainly if we get this result next year, I think we have to look at many of the reconfigurations to see if they’ve been positive,” Mr. Vacca said. “We’ve been led to believe that things in the last several years were getting much better.”

Read [Deaths Rise for Drivers, Bikers and Walkers on City Streets](#) (New York Times, September 27, 2012)

*See page 113 of the MMR <http://www.nyc.gov/html/ops/downloads/pdf/mmr0912/dot.pdf>