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MAR 21 City Hall Defends Bike Lanes

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Whether you're a pedestrian, cabbie or messenger, everyone has an opinion about the city's bike lanes. Despite the growing belief that New York isn't the right place for bikers, a memo released today showed that the lanes still have support in a place that actually matters—City Hall.



In response to today's *New York story* that asks, "Is New York Too New York For Bike Lanes?", a [memo](#) from Howard Wolfson, counselor to Mayor Bloomberg, cited a variety of facts about New York's bike lanes. Whether or not they actually support the bikers' cause isn't clear, but below are a few of the statistics (and a bit of commentary).

- The majority of New Yorkers support bike lanes. According to the most recent Quinnipiac poll, 54 percent of New York City voters say more bike lanes are good "because it's greener and healthier for people to ride their bicycles," while 39 percent say bike lanes are bad "because it leaves less room for cars which increases traffic."

[This might be true, but what about the people who weren't polled? Personally, I encounter reckless bikers more often than drivers, and have been seconds away from being clipped by several.]

- 255 miles of bike lanes have been added in the last four years. The City has 6,000 miles of streets.

[The reason Wolfson included this fact was probably to demonstrate how biker's don't have anywhere safe to ride. It makes sense, but this city is tiny. Squeezing bike lanes on multiple streets would make things worse.]

- Bike lanes improve safety. Though cycling in the city has more than doubled in the last four years, the number of fatal cycling crashes and serious injuries has declined due to the safer bike network.

[This is true. Bike lanes do provide a level of safety and security for those riding them. However, until the city imposes strict rules for bikers, bike lanes won't improve safety. I don't know how many times a delivery biker has zoomed past the red light into oncoming traffic.]

- From 2001 through 2005, four pedestrians were killed in bike-pedestrian accidents. From 2006 through 2010, while cycling in the city doubled, three pedestrians were killed in bike-pedestrian accidents.

[This kind of statistic scares me. I know it's a small number, but that doesn't make pedestrians dying OK. Just because bikes are smaller, doesn't mean those riding them don't have to abide by traffic laws.]

The picture was [taken from New York magazine's website](#). It was illustrated by Peter Rad.

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