NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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NYC DOT Announces Deer Corridor Signage Program

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The New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) Commissioner Polly Trottenberg today announced the implementation of a deer corridor signage program. These signs are the latest step in the de Blasio administration's efforts to address and mitigate the presence of deer in Staten Island. The signage program will provide signs at 21 locations in Staten Island and will rotate six variable message system (VMS) boards to other key areas to up to 27 locations in the borough alerting drivers of possible deer sightings.

The following criteria will guide the placement of the signs: The roadway must pass through or run adjacent to designated parkland or other natural area for at least one-quarter mile; the adjacent area must be known to have a high deer population through professional surveys or other observations by city, state, or federal agencies; the roadway must have experienced at least two documented crashes between deer and a motor vehicle(s). DOT will place one sign in each direction near the entrance to each deer crossing corridor.

In addition to the new signage, the City has convened a task force of city and state agencies to proactively address the growing deer population on Staten Island. The City has researched how the wildlife population is impacting both public health and safety in our natural areas. In 2015, the City funded and completed the first-ever aerial infrared deer survey to assess the first comprehensive baseline deer population for Staten Island. A full task force will be reconvened following the release of the USDA's environmental assessment this year, which will include all management options.

"We know deer can pose significant challenges to our residents on Staten Island, and this administration is aggressively addressing the growing deer population," said Mayor de Blasio. "We're proud to have joined with Borough President Oddo in urging the USDA to quickly release an environmental assessment, and these new road signs are the latest step in our efforts to provide both short and long-term strategies to address the growing deer population."

"We are happy to be part of the City's effort to tackle this deer problem in Staten Island. We will be putting deer signage notifying roadway users when entering areas with known deer populations," said NYC DOT Commissioner Polly Trottenberg.

"Thank you to Mayor de Blasio and NYC DOT for taking this first step in the multi-faceted effort to attack the burgeoning deer problem. The increasing deer population is causing a myriad of problems, including an increase in tick borne illnesses, ecological damage to our wooded areas, and an increased danger of collisions between deer and vehicles," said Borough President Jimmy Oddo. "This new signage will help alert drivers to the presence of deer throughout Staten Island. As the city, state, and federal governments continue to work on a long term deer management plan, I urge Staten Islanders to remain vigilant and alert while driving. The deer are now living in all parts of Staten Island and the risk of serious collisions is real and increasing."

"It's reassuring that the City acknowledges Staten Island's deer population is reaching crisis proportions. Thank you to NYC DOT for implementing this measure," said U.S. Representative Daniel M. Donovan Jr. "At the same time, I'm working with the U.S. Department of Agriculture to advocate for a robust federal response. This problem stretches across jurisdictional boundaries – the government's response should see City, State, and Federal authorities working together to deliver results."

"I am happy that City Hall has heard our concerns. This is a good first step in dealing with the island's deer problem, and we look forward to hearing more about the overall plan," said State Senator Diane J. Savino. "In the meantime these signs will help motorists be aware of possible crossings."

"I thank NYC DOT for responding to our request," said State Senator Andrew Lanza. "These signs will foster greater safety by alerting drivers to those street crossings most frequented by deer."

"Deer have become a constant presence in the lives of Staten Islanders and consequently, a hazard to motorists. Several years ago I fought for the addition of deer crossing signs along the West Shore Expressway, and the installation of this new signage throughout the borough marks an acknowledgement of the explosion in population. While much work remains toward solving the deer issue, this signage is a necessary precaution while we develop a responsible management solution," said Assembly Member Michael Cusick. "I wish to extend sincere thanks to Commissioner Trottenberg and NYC DOT for hearing the wishes of Staten Islanders, and look forward to working with them on addressing the issue at hand."

"These signs will not replace an effective, long-term plan to control Staten Island's exploding deer population, but they will at least provide some advance warning to drivers," said Council Minority Leader Steve Matteo. "I am thankful the administration has listened to the appeals we have been making for years, and now understands the sense of urgency with which this problem needs to be addressed."

"Like so many other challenges that we have confronted with traffic safety initiatives, the increasing deer population on Staten Island threatens the safety of those who drive on our roads. I hope these signs serve as one more reminder for everyone to slow down and remain alert," said Council Member Deborah Rose. "I thank Mayor de Blasio and Commissioner Trottenberg for bringing these signs to our borough, and I look forward to hearing a more comprehensive plan to ensure public health and public safety amid the growing population of deer."

"I'm glad we have reached an agreement with DOT to install Deer Crossing signs at our most problematic locations. Staten Islanders are all too familiar that we are now headed into the season where accidents are more likely to happen. I hope drivers heed these warning signs," said Councilman-elect Joseph Borelli.
Based on the criteria, 11 corridors in Staten Island are eligible for 21 deer signs:

Hylan Boulevard from Poillon Avenue to Page Avenue (2 signs)
West Service Road from Muldoon Avenue to Huguenot Avenue (1 sign)
South Avenue from Forest Avenue to Travis Avenue (2 signs)
Richmond Avenue from Arthur Kill Road to Signs Road (2 signs)
Forest Hill Road from Richmond Avenue to Walcott Avenue (2 signs)
Rockland Avenue from Forest Hill Road to Richmond Road (2 signs)
Brielle Avenue from Rockland Avenue to Bradley Avenue (2 signs)
Manor Road from Rockland Avenue to Brielle Avenue (2 signs)
Ocean Terrace from Milden Avenue to Todt Hill Road (2 signs)
Arthur Kill Road from Veterans Road West to Bloomingdale Road (2 signs)
Veterans Road West from Sharrotts Road to Tyrellan Avenue (2 signs)

DOT will install the deer signs at these corridors by early December in the borough.

In the meantime, DOT will immediately expand our effort to alert motorist of the presence of deer using variable message system (VMS) boards. DOT already deployed two VMS and will now deploy up to six (6) in Staten Island to target major thoroughfares where deer sightings are common.

The initial locations identified for VMS boards are Hylan Boulevard at Buffalo Street;

Sharrotts Road between Arthur Kill Road and Veterans Road West; Father Capodanno Boulevard at Midland Avenue; Father Capodanno Boulevard at Lily Pond Road; Forest Avenue at Gulf Avenue; and Victory Boulevard at West Shore Expressway Service Road.

The VMS boards give us the mobility to target high-profile areas and continually remind Staten Island motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians that deer are extremely mobile and sightings occur throughout the entire borough. In addition to these efforts DOT will continue to use our social media outlets to remind Staten Islanders to keep vigilant, particularly around wetlands, woods and wide open areas.

For more information about DOT's transportation goals please visit www.nyc.gov/dot.