



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Timothy M. Kennedy

As Students Head Back to School, Senator Tim Kennedy Joins Village of Depew and the Cantalician Center to Announce State Funding for Traffic Safety Improvements Along George Urban Boulevard

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DEPEW, NY – Senator Tim Kennedy (D-Buffero) joined Village of Depew Mayor Kevin Peterson, Cantalician Center Executive Director Anne Spisiak, and Depew Police Department Lt. Bill Curr Thursday to announce he has secured a \$64,000 state grant to implement traffic safety improvements at two locations along George Urban Boulevard. The stretch of roadway between Dick Rd. and Transit Rd. has been a cause for concern for many years, with more than 19 accidents or traffic stops by Depew Police that could have led to instances involving tractor trailers and trucks colliding with a CSX rail crossing bridge since January of 2018. During one of those incidents, occurring as recently as September 3rd, a tractor trailer driver drove his rig under the bridge, only to have the top of his roof sheared off when he emerged from the east side. With this funding, the Village of Depew will install an infrared height detection sensor system, so that if a tall vehicle trips the beams, a solar lighted flashing low-bridge warning signs will turn on, alerting the driver that their vehicle will not clear the bridge.

Additionally, Senator Kennedy worked with the Village of Depew, Erie County, and the Cantalician Center in February to help lower the speed limit near the Center from 30mph to 20mph, making it a School Zone. With this state funding, Depew will install an LED-flashing Solar Speed Sign system to bring the change in speed to the attention of drivers. The announcement comes as Depew Schools began hybrid and remote learning, with the nearby Cantalician Center welcoming students back recently as well.

"As we continue to rebuild a sense of normalcy amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, public safety remains a key concern, especially when our children are adjusting to a new model of learning. When the Village of Depew and the Cantalician Center brought these safety concerns to our attention, we knew we had to figure out a way to elevate them and secure funding to address them quickly," said Senator Tim Kennedy. "These investments in safety improvements along one of Depew's busiest roadways is critical, both for drivers and pedestrians alike. I'm proud to deliver them with partners such as Mayor Kevin Peterson and Anne Spisiak, who are always looking for ways to better serve our greater community."

"As a 31-year resident that lives in the neighborhood where this traffic hazard is located, I have seen far more instances where large tractor trailer trucks have not been able to clear the low bridge and have gotten stuck then our recent data attests to," said Depew Mayor Kevin Peterson. "This situation causes traffic delays, requires Depew Police to respond and could lead to situations where other vehicles or pedestrians are put in harm's way. It is anticipated that the IR Over-Height Warning System and the solar school zone speed signs will help make George Urban Blvd. safer for everyone."

"We cannot thank Senator Tim Kennedy, the Village of Depew Mayor Kevin Peterson, the Depew Police Department, and the Erie County Highway Department enough for helping to make our school a safer place to learn and play. This funding will allow George Urban Boulevard in front of our school building to be designated as an official school zone with signage that will remind motorists that our students are regularly outside enjoying the sidewalks and green spaces around our campus," said Anne Spisiak, Executive Director, Cantalician Center. "During these very challenging times and as we reopen in hybrid for in-person learning, this is one less safety issue that our students, families, and staff have to be concerned about."

In 2018, Kennedy secured a \$100,000 state grant for the Cantalician Center that, along with additional funding from the Russell J. Salvatore Foundation, helped to convert the Center's concrete interior courtyard into a more child-friendly space. The Cantalician Center was founded in 1956, and today offers school age, daycare, and preschool services for children who have been diagnosed with a disability.

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