



Dear Chairs of the Finance and Ways & Means Committees,

Open Plans is an organization fighting for a more livable New York City, and we're writing today to share our stances on some of Governor Hochul's proposals in the Executive Budget, as well as highlight our budget priorities.

DO NOT INCLUDE: Autonomous Vehicle Authorization

In the Executive Budget, Governor Hochul included a pilot program that would allow DMV to license and regulate for-hire autonomous vehicles (AVs) to operate in New York State outside of New York City. While Open Plans is a New York City organization, **we are extremely concerned about the program and request it not be included in the final budget.**

- While AV technology has shown preliminary reductions in crashes, there are a host of other unanswered questions that must be answered before a launch at scale.
- Municipalities have no say in whether or how AVs enter their city. While the program would require a "sufficient demonstration of support" to operate in a locality, it is extremely vague and undefined legislatively.
- There is a serious lack of oversight as it relates to the remote operators of AVs; we do not know who takes control of these vehicles in the event of an emergency.
- There are no codified guardrails to hold companies accountable for breaking traffic laws; this is an issue other cities with AVs contend with.
- There are no measures that ensure and codify data transparency, including transparency about disengagements, traffic violations, mileage, or incidents involving vulnerable road users.

New York should learn from municipalities across the country that have already launched AVs:

- A child was struck by a Waymo on January 23th, 2026 in Santa Monica, California, which raises serious concerns regarding safety.
- A scaled AV deployment could nearly double vehicle miles traveled, reduce transit ridership by three quarters, and hinder emergency response operations.
- San Francisco has seen a number of dangerous and illegal behaviors by Waymo vehicles including stopping in bus and bike lanes, making illegal u-turns, and recently, the entire fleet stopped working while on the road during a blackout.
- In Atlanta, local police officials have complained that there is no process for citing AVs for behaviors that warrant a citation for a human driver.
- In Austin, Waymo vehicles have repeatedly failed to stop for school buses, putting children in danger.
- In Santa Monica, like in the majority of localities, local officials have officially stated that their hands are completely tied to response to resident requests for policy fixes.



INCLUDE: ACE Expansion for Loading Zone Enforcement

Illegally occupied loading zones create congestion, deflate economic activity, and result in the most dangerous kinds of double parking: large trucks loading and unloading in our travel lanes. **To remedy this, we request that, in the budget, ACE be expanded to include automated loading zone enforcement for unauthorized vehicles by including section 4-08(k)(2) of the Rules of the City of New York in the list of violations it can enforce.**

Results from other cities that have begun to use automated enforcement in loading zones are extremely positive. The “smart loading zone” program in Pittsburgh, which includes automated loading zone enforcement, has resulted in a 95% reduction in double parking and a potential 4.5% reduction in traffic.

By expanding the ACE program to include loading zone enforcement, we have the opportunity to lower congestion by reducing double and illegal parking, making everyday New Yorkers’ commutes quicker. This would also increase commercial activity by freeing up loading zones for loading and unloading, thereby reducing dwell times.

INCLUDE: S8665/A5440 & a \$35 Million Allocation

For many of the same reasons we believe loading zone enforcement should be included in the ACE program, **we believe that the automated curb enforcement program in S8665/A5440 should be included and authorized in the budget, along with a \$35 million allocation for the program’s first 150 cameras.** This program would allow New York City to enforce most parking violations with automated cameras.

We know automated enforcement works; the speed camera, red light camera, and ACE programs have been wildly successful. It’s time we continue to expand our automated enforcement capabilities and make our streets safer and more efficient. **Even without the allocation of \$35 million, we believe that S8665/A5440 should be authorized in the budget.**

INCLUDE: Stop Super Speeders

Open Plans strongly supports Governor Hochul’s proposal to place speed limiters in the cars of super speeders and requests it be included in the final budget.

The best way to stop speeders is by making them unable to speed. A speed limiter is an unobtrusive, effective way to prevent speeders from speeding without taking away their mobility. This is a smart, effective policy.



DO NOT INCLUDE: Car Insurance Proposal

Open Plans opposes Governor Hochul's proposal on car insurance and injury and requests it be removed in the final budget. This proposal would dramatically weaken legal protections for people injured by cars, shift costs to families and taxpayers, and do nothing to improve safety or reduce insurance premiums.

The Governor's proposal guts long-standing protections for crash victims and benefits insurance companies at the expense of people harmed by negligent drivers. It would result in more denied claims, less accountability for dangerous driving, and increased blame placed on victims. It will shift financial responsibility from those responsible back onto victims.

It does not prevent crashes, improve street safety or guarantee lower insurance premiums. Similar reforms in other states did not reduce insurance costs. Instead, injured pedestrians and cyclists will pay the price.

Respectfully,

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