



ISSUES FACING NEW YORK CITY'S AGENCIES: DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Overview

The operating budget of the New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) is about \$1.2 billion in Fiscal Year (FY) 2022. Department operations include management of more than 6,300 miles of streets, highways and public plazas, 13,250 signalized intersections, 315,000 streetlights, and 350 million linear markings. DOT also oversees the City's bike share system, maintains 1,316 miles of cycling network, and manages over 140 miles of on-street protected bicycle lanes as well as capital infrastructure investment and maintenance for bridges, street resurfacing, pothole repair and street and sidewalk reconstruction.

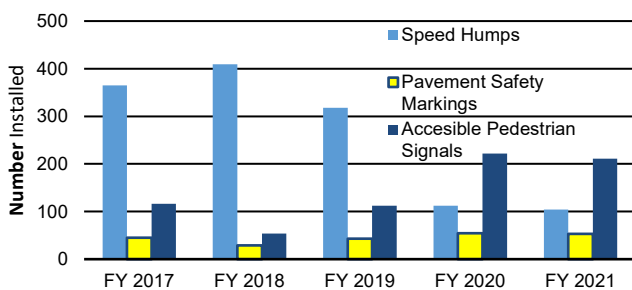
Pandemic Impact on Agency Operations

The pandemic required a shift in DOT operations, initially changing traffic patterns and requiring a pause in construction and repair work. As the City began its recovery, adaptations were needed to expand outdoor public space to encourage economic activity amid the public health crisis. DOT managed the administration and enforcement of the Open Streets and Open Restaurants programs. Additionally, as traffic patterns have returned, the City has indicated that driver behavior has become more erratic, leading to a significant increase in the number of traffic fatalities in FY 2021.

ISSUES FACING THE AGENCY

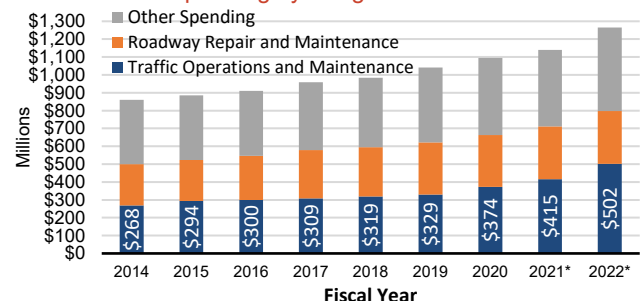
- Future of Vision Zero:** Launched in 2014, Vision Zero is the City's initiative to eliminate all traffic-related fatalities. After a period of slowdown during the pause in construction in 2020, DOT sped up the installation of certain safety measures in FY 2021, including accessible pedestrian signals and pavement safety markings, although speed humps remain behind the agency target of 250 (see Figure 1). Despite these improvements, traffic deaths rose to 275 in FY 2021, the highest level since 2014. The City expense budget includes funding to continue efforts to enhance safety measures, the largest new investment of which is for the continued expansion of DOT's traffic camera program.
- Maintenance and Repair Catch-up:** Pothole repair and lane mile resurfacing both declined in FY 2021. The City has attributed the decline to a lack of contract work for resurfacing, which exacerbated pandemic-related staffing issues. The DOT Roadway Repair, Maintenance and Inspection budget is about \$295 million in FY 2022, similar to levels over the past three fiscal years (see Figure 2).
- Potential Use of Infrastructure Funds:** It will take some time for discretionary projects to be selected by the U.S. Department of Transportation; however, the City may take advantage of funds in the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) for projects that focus on safety, reliability, and expanding sustainability. IIJA includes \$6 billion in funding for vision zero plans and \$15 billion for projects that focus on advancing sustainability and equity. DOT may be able to advance non-vehicular modes of travel and safety programs with these funds, but it will likely have to coordinate with other large transit agencies in the region for transit funds.

FIGURE 1
Selected Street and Pedestrian Safety Measures



Sources: NYC Mayor's Office of Operations; OSC analysis

FIGURE 2
Selected DOT Spending by Budget Function



Sources: NYC Office of Management and Budget; OSC analysis. *City forecast.