Curb Enthusiasm Episode 8 Part 2 Transcript

00;00;00;24 - 00;00;15;26

Emily Weidenhof

Welcome back to part two of our conversation with Eric Beaton. Eric, you and the research, implementation and safety team at D.O.T have spent a lot of time working and thinking about daylighting. Could you tell us a little bit about what daylighting is?

00;00;15;28 - 00;00;29;00

Eric Beaton

Sure. And daylighting is a little bit of a term of art, but we usually take it to mean the restriction of parking near corners so that there's more visibility for both pedestrians and drivers approaching so that they can see each other and see the street well.

00;00;29;00 - 00;00;36;03

Emily Weidenhof

And not all daylighting is created equally. So what are what are some of the ways we create that space?

00;00;36;06 - 00;00;50;11

Eric Beaton

Within the city, we have different levels where sometimes we do it just with signs. You can put up a no standing or no stopping sign there that tells people that they can't be parked in that location. But increasingly we can harden that daylighting, so that people really can't park there.

00;00;50;14 - 00;01;13;21

Eric Beaton

So I think we know nature abhors a vacuum in parking spaces especially. So if it's the space available, people will often park their car there. And so we can put something in that space, we can put bike racks, we can put big concrete blocks. Ideally, we even build it out into a full pedestrian neck down and then just make it part of the sidewalk, which is, more challenging thing to do, but provides a better overall treatment.

00;01;13;23 - 00;01;37;29

Emily Weidenhof

So cities and towns across the United States and globally deployed daylighting to improve street safety. You have started to take a look at what this actually means for roadway safety in New York City. Could you talk about that work and how data is really informing your perspective there?

00;01;38;02 - 00;01;43;08 **Eric Beaton** Yeah, and I think this is something where there's been very little study, in part because it sounds so obvious.

00;01;43;08 - 00;02;05;11

Eric Beaton

Better visibility. It must be good. We don't even need to study it. But I think it really speaks to the value of doing good study, even when you think you know the answer. And sometimes you do the study and you find something that you were not expecting, and in some ways, that's one of the most challenging things, is when you get data that doesn't match what you originally thought.

00;02;05;14 - 00;02;16;25

Eric Beaton

And, you know, there's something called confirmation bias, where people tend to look much more at data, that there is an agreement with what they already think. And that's an easy thing to do because you say, yes, we were right the whole time.

00;02;16;27 - 00;02;17;05 **Emily Weidenhof** Right.

00;02;17;08 - 00;02;24;01

Eric Beaton

But when you get data that's different. It really makes you take a step back and say, it's like, what are we really doing here?

00;02;24;04 - 00;02;43;02

Eric Beaton

And so we took, as far as we can tell, was one of the first studies that really looked at the effect of daylighting on injuries. And the results were not what we were expecting. You know, I think we thought we would find that hardened daylighting is better, but that all daylighting is at least a little helpful.

00;02;43;05 - 00;03;05;01

Eric Beaton

And that's really not what we got at all. What we found is that hardened daylighting is helpful. You know, just like many of our other safety tools like medians and leading pedestrian intervals. We like that, and we want to keep doing it. But we found that unhardened daylighting was neutral or in some cases, even a negative for safety.

00;03;05;04 - 00;03;29;17

Eric Beaton

And that made us take a step back and say, hmmm. It's really worth taking a moment just because it's such an unusual result to say, like, what did we do to get this? Did we twist the

data just so that we could find a way to not take parking. And we didn't. We actually had our, our very qualified data team to a deep dive without giving them any direction on what to find.

00;03;29;19 - 00;03;47;12

Eric Beaton

And first we looked at daylighting that we've installed around the city in recent years. And we did a before and after look, you know, what were the injury rates before? What were the injury rates after? And that's where we found that hardened daylighting was really helping. The injury rates were going down in a very statistically significant way.

00;03;47;14 - 00;04;08;10

Eric Beaton

And we found that the before and after for other locations was essentially zero, and there was not a statistically significant result. And these are locations that in some cases might have been done for, for visibility. In other cases, it might have been done to help large vehicles turn, but they were all locations that were intentionally done to create the daylighting at the corner.

00;04;08;12 - 00;04;30;18

Eric Beaton

So that was one set of results. And then we wanted to look at a much broader set. So we looked at places where daylighting already occurs around the city. And these can be things like a fire hydrant that happens to be placed at the right location. Fire hydrants are very close to randomly distributed around the city. Sometimes they're on two sides of the street, sometimes they're one side, sometimes they're at the corner, sometimes they're not.

00;04;30;18 - 00;04;51;03

Eric Beaton

So it was as good a proxy as we could find for randomness. And we looked at what happens at intersections where fire hydrants are providing daylighting versus intersections where they aren't. And this was the really surprising piece, which was that injuries were higher at the locations that had this form of daylighting. At any individual location, it's not a big result, right?

00;04;51;04 - 00;05;08;24

Eric Beaton

It's not that you see a fire hydrant and you have to think that that's a dangerous corner, but on aggregate it made us think like, okay, if you do more of this, the number of injuries are going to go up. And if you do it at 40,000 intersections around the city, each risk can be individually small. They can really add up to a lot.

00;05;08;24 - 00;05;26;19 **Eric Beaton** It could be as many as 15,000 more injuries in a year that made us go like, whoa, what's going on here? It made us think a little bit. One of our most successful safety treatment programs has been our turn coming program. And part of the point of turn coming is that we really tighten up the radius where people turn.

00;05;26;19 - 00;05;44;10

Eric Beaton

So instead of being able to take a big wide sweep, like you're getting on a highway ramp, you have to go to the corner and turn very slowly. It gives you a chance to see pedestrians, pedestrians, a chance to see you. And even in the event that something happens, you're moving at slow speed. The risk of serious injury or death is much lower.

00;05;44;12 - 00;06;03;20

Eric Beaton

So that's been a great program. The effect of unhardened daylighting is in some ways the opposite. You're taking something with a tighter turn radius and you're opening it up. So on the one hand you get better visibility, but on the other hand, you've created this very wide space of the corner where people can turn more quickly. So we're still, you know, this is a new result.

00;06;03;20 - 00;06;24;09

Eric Beaton

We're still looking into it. But we think part of what may be going on is that people are able to turn more widely and really drives us back to the point of when you do daylighting, we really wanted to have that hardened element to it. So that people get sort of both benefits, the additional visibility while still maintaining the street design that forces people to turn slowly.

00;06;24;12 - 00;06;46;20

Emily Weidenhof

Yes. And I think there are also just benefits of not just having empty space, but being able to use that space for additional amenities: seating, bicycle parking, greening, you know, opportunities to just get more value out of our space, and kind of have some double duty there at the corners.

00;06;46;24 - 00;07;12;19

Eric Beaton

In some ways, obvious. In some ways it's not. When you put a bike rack out, you know, people are in a park, their bikes there. But we started putting out concrete blocks and granite blocks for the purpose is really just to occupy the space. But what you see is that through the right height, people start sitting on them. And we've done a number of art wraps where we can sort of enliven the public space by providing a little bit of public art at these locations, and we can make them into, you know, little miniature public spaces instead of just an empty space on the street.

00;07;12;21 - 00;07;30;08

Eric Beaton

And the other point is, just as we know, if we create that empty space on the street, someone's going to park there, some truck is going to be there. That's true of the fire hydrants too. But we in some ways makes that a really good comparison. That, you kind of know what happens when we just leave an occupied space in most parts of the city.

00;07;30;11 - 00;07;34;09

Eric Beaton

New Yorkers like to park, and that's where they go.

00;07;34;11 - 00;07;58;13

Emily Weidenhof

So all of this, really interesting work that you've done has really challenged some assumptions about daylighting. When we go to communicate the results of a study or something that has very nuanced data, it can be hard to communicate beyond a quick headline. So I think, you know, what would you like to communicate as the main takeaways from the daylighting study, what should people really understand beyond, you know, the initial headline?

00;08;03;19 - 00;08;05;06 **Eric Beaton**

00;08;05;08 - 00;08;25;18

Eric Beaton

One takeaway for sure is just that hardened daylighting is good. We're not in a position. where we're saying, "daylighting. it's all bad. Don't do it." Like we think, done well, daylighting is really helpful. And I think the flip side of that is just doing it broadly without thinking about individual locations, treating it as one size fits all is not the right thing.

00;08;25;18 - 00;08;44;00

Eric Beaton

Like there are parts of New York City, corners that are very different from each other. They have different needs, and when we do safety treatments, we should really think about what's right for that corner. And then I think more broadly, there's a point. And you had a great guest on a couple weeks ago talking about, the book, Killed by a Traffic Engineer.

00;08;44;03 - 00;09;08;05

Eric Beaton

There's a lot of things that we, as street designers have thought were good for safety over the years that turn out not to be, right? We thought we thought that wider roads and straighter roads and separating pedestrians from cars and getting rid of objects along the side of the street, every one of those was widely accepted as good for safety and became standard practice until someone actually studied it and said, what's happening here?

00;09;08;08 - 00;09;27;10

Eric Beaton

And thankfully, we've now done a lot of work to undo a lot of those things and because we have the good data behind it, and this may be another thing in that category of just because we thought it was a good idea, doesn't mean it is. I also think there's a lot more research to do. I think the research we did pointed out that there may be an issue.

00;09;27;12 - 00;09;43;28

Eric Beaton

I think as we do more, we're going to want to keep studying it. And then seeing what shows up in the data. But we at least want to make sure we're adjusting our behavior based on what we're finding. And, you know, and making that a standard practice that we learn from what we do and we change our behavior accordingly.

00;09;44;00 - 00;10;03;12

Emily Weidenhof

The transportation landscape is also just so dynamic. So it's not only about the street, but it's how our vehicles are changing. It's about who's using vehicles and when. So just a lot to kind of stay on top of and really keep the pulse of what's actually happening, as you say, versus just relying on assumptions.

00;10;03;19 - 00;10;04;17 **Eric Beaton** Yeah, absolutely.

00;10;04;23 - 00;10;21;00

Emily Weidenhof

I want to talk a little bit about something that D.O.T. has invested a tremendous amount of energy in: expanding speed cameras and red light cameras. Could you talk about that effort and the role of data in decision making there?

00;10;21;02 - 00;10;41;03

Eric Beaton

Yeah, absolutely. Because automated enforcement is one of the things that's just changed dramatically in the years since we focused on Vision Zero, and we were part of developing the first Vision Zero action plan under Mayor de Blasio. And we wrote this wishlist of stuff that we said, okay, we'll put it in our ten year plan, but it's never really going to happen.

00;10;41;03 - 00;11;00;15 **Eric Beaton** And we said that there should be speed cameras at 100 locations around the city, but, you know, probably won't get there. And then we look ten years later and we have the ability to put a thousand speed cameras out there. And they work, right? And you see not just that they go out and people get tickets and they hate it.

00;11;00;15 - 00;11;23;24

Eric Beaton

And, you know, think that the city's out to get them, but that people get a ticket and they don't get more. That when we put a camera out there, over time, the number of tickets issued go down by 94%. And then what you see as well is that more than half the tickets that the speed cameras give out are given to people who, who have license plates not registered in New York City.

00;11;23;26 - 00;11;42;16

Eric Beaton

So sometimes there's an idea that, like, you're just you're picking on this local community. But what really happens is that the local people learn that this is what's going on, and they learn to drive better. But the people from out of town, out of state are still driving fast and those are the ones that we then have to be able to get to.

00;11;42;18 - 00;12;01;26

Eric Beaton

Then to place them, we go to the data as well. For speed cameras, we look at two things. We look at where speeds are high, and this is where we get to go to some of those big data sources where we can say we have a pretty good idea of speeds on streets all over the city, so we know where is the average speed high, where's the 90th percentile speed high.

00;12;01;28 - 00;12;18;28

Eric Beaton

And then we also look at crashes, because then you want that intersection of two things, of high speeds and high crashes, because that's where speed cameras will be most effective if it's just high speeds. But the crashes aren't happening, this is probably something we should be looking at there, but the crashes aren't happening. It's not incredibly urgent.

00;12;19;01 - 00;12;33;05

Eric Beaton

And if there's crashes but not speeding, we say, yeah, we have got to do something there, but speed cameras aren't the answer. It's enforcement or redesigning the street or something else. So you want to make sure that we're targeting the treatment to where it's most needed.

00;12;33;07 - 00;12;44;04 **Eric Beaton** Part of your team is, the freight team who is doing amazing, innovative work that is really transforming New York City.

00;12;44;06 - 00;13;03;26

Emily Weidenhof

Could you talk a little bit about the role of data in kind of better understanding commercial versus residential freight usage, demand, and how that's kind of shaping programs and shaping the team's work in helping get people their packages in an efficient and safe way?

00;13;03;26 - 00;13;10;02

Eric Beaton

Yeah, and our freight team has really been at the leading edge in a lot of ways of understanding how things have changed around the city.

00;13;10;02 - 00;13;33;04

Eric Beaton

We've always known that New York City is truck dependent. You don't have to be a genius in data to go look around and see that you know, with there's not a lot of rail options. We know we know that trucks are making those deliveries, but understanding where they're going and where they're coming from and how that's changed has really helped change the way we do business, especially over the course of the 2020s.

00;13;33;11 - 00;13;51;14

Eric Beaton

By the end of the 2019, going into 2020, most deliveries in New York City were going to businesses. They were going to office buildings, they were going to stores. It was something in the neighborhood of two thirds of those deliveries were happening at commercial establishments. And from our perspective, that's great. We know they're going to these big locations.

00;13;51;17 - 00;14;12;13

Eric Beaton

We can do loading zones. They're going to they're going to come in a very predictable way. We had more work to do, but we had the plans. What happened is then we had the pandemic. People work from home. More people have different travel patterns. People are doing all kinds of different things and really lit a fire under the e-commerce trends that were already happening.

00;14;12;15 - 00;14;31;22

Eric Beaton

And we have a reversal now where 60 to 70% of packages in New York City are delivered to residential addresses instead. And that's a very different problem for us, because on the one hand, getting packages at home is part of what makes New York City continue to be a place that works, right? It helps you get goods at reasonable cost.

00;14;31;22 - 00;14;54;00

Eric Beaton

It helps make people's lives work a lot better. And you know when you're doing a lot of things and being out in the city and potentially having long commutes, being able to have those goods delivered like is important. But on the other hand, it means that trucks are going all over the place, that you have double parking in places that you didn't have it before, that you have larger trucks sometimes going in places where people don't expect them.

00;14;54;02 - 00;15;18;09

Eric Beaton

And it's not always clear whether that's a truck making a shortcut, which they shouldn't do, or a truck that's making a delivery somewhere, which is allowed. We need to be able to plan for that world, too. So we started our neighborhood loading zone program, where in particularly in denser parts of the city, we provide legal places for the trucks to be able to get to the curb and be able to load and unload without blocking bike lanes or bus stops or travel lanes.

00;15;18;09 - 00;15;21;14

Eric Beaton

We just opened this week our first micro hubs on the Upper West Side.

00;15;21;21 - 00;15;22;14 **Emily Weidenhof** Very exciting.

00;15;22;18 - 00;15;49;22

Eric Beaton

Which you know to anyone who doesn't know what that is. The idea is that the truck should go to our neighborhood and stop once instead of going around block to block and dropping off three boxes here and two boxes there and just going down the street, that way, they go and they stop and then for a radius of about a quarter mile, it should be delivering those last mile goods by hand truck or by cargo bike or by some place that's much less impactful on the transportation sphere.

00;15;49;24 - 00;16;02;05

Eric Beaton

So this is something that hasn't been used all that much in the United States, or even really around the world, but we think is trying to get at the issue of you can't deal with this if it's a completely dispersed problem, you don't know where the truck is going to be.

00;16;02;07 - 00;16;29;27 **Eric Beaton** But if you do know where the truck is going to be and you can facilitate that greener, safer last mile of delivery, then it works better for everyone. Then the trucking company knows that they're going to have a space where they can pull into. So it's efficient for them. For anyone who's on the street, they're not dealing with trucks circling and double parking and all over the place because that truck is out of traffic and that last mile is being delivered by human powered or by electric powered vehicles.

00;16;29;27 - 00;16;41;03

Eric Beaton

So we think it's going to work really well. You know, when people stay tuned to make sure that that it all fits together properly. But it is the kind of solution that needs to get at the changing world we live in.

00;16;41;05 - 00;16;47;27 **Emily Weidenhof** Yeah. So speaking of feelings, New Yorkers have very big emotions about cyclists.

00;16;47;29 - 00;16;50;06 **Eric Beaton** You don't say?

00;16;50;06 - 00;16;52;17 Emily Weidenhof

00;16;52;17 - 00;17;20;01

Emily Weidenhof

As well as cycling infrastructure, and that's almost two different groups. There is the interaction with cyclists that we hear a lot about, and then there's also, "ugh the bike lane on that street," right? Could you talk a little bit about the work that New York City has done to make a more thriving, cycling friendly city and what the data is actually telling us about the impacts of that cycling infrastructure?

00;17;20;03 - 00;17;37;29

Eric Beaton

Sure and there's two sides of it. The first is, of course, we want more people to bike, right? It is incredibly environmentally friendly, it's something that can make you feel good. It keeps you healthy. We want to get more New Yorkers on bikes, but I think we also recognize that most trips in New York City are not going to be made by bike anytime soon.

00;17;38;01 - 00;17;56;29

Eric Beaton

There are people who can bike and people who may not be able to, and we need a system that works for everybody. So then people come to us and they say, "why are you doing all

this stuff for cyclists? They're not a huge portion of the of the travel traveling public out there. And I just see you doing all these huge projects for them."

00;17;57;01 - 00;18;12;21

Eric Beaton

And, you know, first there's a little bit of, you know, who, but what does for them mean? You know, a very large number of New Yorkers cycle sometimes, even if they're not cycling to work every day. And you have any working cyclist, you have parents, you have children, and you want to create safe space for all of them.

00;18;12;23 - 00;18;34;00

Eric Beaton

But more importantly, designing a street that's good for cyclists becomes good for everybody. And you know, when we put a protected bike lane out on a street, what we see is that there's a benefit to cyclists. The actual number of cyclist injuries stay is actually fairly level because the number of cyclists increases. So much risk has gone far down.

00;18;34;03 - 00;18;59;21

Eric Beaton

But what we see is the safety improves for everyone. The total number of deaths and serious injuries on the street goes down by about 18%. The number of pedestrian serious injuries and fatalities goes down by about 29%. And for some of our most vulnerable, for the older New Yorkers, the amount goes down by almost 40%. Like this creates a street that is safer, even if you plan to never touch a bike in your life.

00;18;59;23 - 00;19;15;18

Eric Beaton

And the reason for that is it creates a more predictable street. You know, where the cyclists are going to be, you know where the traffic is going to be. People are not weaving around so much. We are able to create shorter distances so that people have less street to cross. It helps everyone obey the rules are much better.

00;19;15;21 - 00;19;30;21

Eric Beaton

A little piece of it is that, you know, one of the things we always hear about cyclists is they they're just running red lights, you know, what can you do about that? And the answer is, of course, always partially enforcement, right? Like no one should run a red light that's unsafe for you. It's unsafe for everyone else on the street.

00;19;30;24 - 00;19;53;00

Eric Beaton

But we also know that the police are never going to be everywhere at every time. So we want to think about what are the things we can be doing to encourage cyclists to follow the rules. And one of them that we're trying out right now is to have traffic signals aimed

specifically at cyclists, you might say aims, not just, oh, we want them to look there, but aimed as in, they are at a high level for a cyclist right there on the street.

00;19;53;03 - 00;20;11;29

Eric Beaton

And it's not just car infrastructure that cyclists are expected to follow, and it's something that is very visible to them. And when you combine it with things like good signage and then designs that encourage people to slow down at intersections and traffic signal progressions that work at the speed of cyclists, that they have a benefit for following the greens.

00;20;12;02 - 00;20;18;27

Eric Beaton

We think that these can really work together to make a more predictable street, which is good for cycling, but also good for everyone else out there.

00;20;19;00 - 00;20;42;19

Emily Weidenhof

Absolutely. And so much of the work that we're seeing from the agency now is a really comprehensive approach to incorporating all of the different street users and their experience to, you know, really create a comprehensive, safer and improved environment for everyone on the road.

00;20;42;22 - 00;21;03;22

Emily Weidenhof

Hey, listeners, we hope you're enjoying this episode of our podcast. For those of you who are as enthusiastic about transportation and planning as we are, we'd like to hear from you. You can submit topics and questions that you'd like us to cover at NYC gov forward slash curb enthusiasm. And now back to our conversation.

00;21;03;25 - 00;21;06;25

Emily Weidenhof

I want to talk a little bit about Vision Zero. We are ten years in to this amazingly collaborative effort that really utilizes data to drive focused results. What do the next ten years of Vision Zero look like?

00;21;07;00 - 00;21;34;06

Eric Beaton

You know, as a baseline, it means doing more of what we're doing because it's working right. Fatalities are down very substantially from where they were ten years ago. And in a way that's really exceeded what we've seen in peer cities around the country.

00;21;34;08 - 00;21;55;15 **Eric Beaton** But it's also what do we add to that? Like what it's what we're doing plus. Over the past ten years, we've made so many advances in terms of street design and enforcement technology. So we're going to keep doing that. But the big things out there are no longer the Queens boulevards of the world where you have, you know, a dozen people who might be killed on a single street in a year.

00;21;55;15 - 00;22;17;15

Eric Beaton

It's much more spread out. You start to look at the dangerous drivers that are out there. A very large number of fatalities are caused by people where it's predictable. They've had prior DUIs, they've had prior license suspensions or current license suspensions. And you see it and you say, you know, that was not an accident, right? That was predictable.

00;22;17;18 - 00;22;51;12

Eric Beaton

And how do we try to get those people either off the street or driving more safely. And then it's looking at vehicle design too. You know, Europe is far ahead of us. In London., you can't drive a truck in that doesn't have a really excellent visibility. And the laws are different in the United States. It's not quite so easy to just say we're going to have a different safety standard for New York City, but working at the local, state and federal levels, how do we all work to make sure that the vehicles we're putting on the street are not just protecting the people who are inside the vehicles, but the people around them as well?

00;22;52;07 - 00;23;24;23

Eric Beaton

And I think those are going to be the two really big new things that we had over the next decade. How do we do those, I think there's still a lot of work to do because they're not entirely under our control. We're going to need a lot of partnerships, but we can still set the way and by working towards it, you know, we find that that even though we can't do everything ourselves, we're able to accomplish quite a lot just by being so large and being so out in the public and frankly, sometimes by having so much purchasing power. When we contract with trucking companies, as we can tell them what they have to use.

00;23;24;23 - 00;23;45;24

Eric Beaton

We more or less created the truck side guard program from scratch with our partners at D.C.A.S, because we're just such a big player in the world that they start doing it for us, and then it becomes natural to start doing it elsewhere. So I think we want to leverage however much of that we can to be able to push the industry, to push the world where it needs to be.

00;23;45;27 - 00;24;02;12 Emily Weidenhof Yeah. And is there any data that we are just testing out or just starting to use that you are excited about or anticipating will play a big role in how we think about Vision Zero in the next decade?

00;24;02;14 - 00;24;15;11

Eric Beaton

I think really looking at sensors and what we can get from them, because something that we do, we hear from people is okay, the data isn't saying that there's crashes happening, but there's a lot of almost crashes.

00;24;15;13 - 00;24;19;29

Eric Beaton

And that's something that it doesn't show up in our data. But can also be true.

00;24;20;01 - 00;24;20;08 **Emily Weidenhof** Yeah.

00;24;20;09 - 00;24;28;16

Eric Beaton

And we can put up a sensor now. And this is what we're testing. And we think it's going to get there even if it's not there today.

00;24;28;18 - 00;24;45;16

Eric Beaton

But you can put up a sensor and it can start telling you about near-misses, things that could have been a bad incident if only someone hadn't moved at the last minute. And that lets us be more proactive and get ahead of what's happening. Because if you're only going to where the fatality happened, like we need to do that, that's good.

00;24;45;21 - 00;24;55;08

Eric Beaton

But you want to go to where the fatality might be next. And I think we do some of that now with the data we have. But with these, these new sensors, we think we'll be able to do even more.

00;24;55;15 - 00;25;07;26

Emily Weidenhof

Right. And I think those near-miss moments also play into people's feeling and their understanding of a space as safe or not, so targeting those, those moments as something we need to tackle and fix will help, overall change the experience and the level of comfort people feel on our streets.

00;25;07;28 - 00;25;19;10

Eric Beaton

00;25;19;12 - 00;25;20;13 **Eric Beaton** Yeah, absolutely.

00;25;20;13 - 00;25;27;11

Emily Weidenhof

Yeah. So I wanted to ask you, what is your biggest breach of transportation etiquette?

00;25;27;19 - 00;25;44;09

Eric Beaton

I don't know if it's etiquette, exactly, but I certainly hope I gave some people a good, New York story where I was getting on the shuttle at, Grand Central, and the doors are closing, and then a couple from out of town jumps on that, you know, and you can tell that they were from out of town.

00;25;44;09 - 00;26;02;25

Eric Beaton

They're looking around for for where to be. And then they turn to me and they say, like, how many stops to get to Grand Central? I'm looking at the trains pulling out of the station. I was saying two stops, two stops. You'll be there and, you know. And then I got off the train at Times Square and never looked back.

00;26;02;27 - 00;26;22;04

Eric Beaton

But I hope that they had that experience and thought of it as the story that they can tell instead of the New Yorker who was a jerk and didn't just tell them what was going on. But I sort of like it as a, as, like it was actually the answer for where they were right there. They didn't have a chance to do anything else and let them, maybe learn a little something about where they were.

00;26;22;06 - 00;26;32;09

Emily Weidenhof

Yeah. Great. And something we like to ask all of our guests. What are you most enthusiastic about for the future of transportation?

00;26;32;15 - 00;26;56;04

Eric Beaton

Something that really excites me is how people have started to view this as a career. You know, we hire a tremendous number of people who are just excited to work here, and they come here at sometimes from an environmental field or a public safety field or an

engineering field, and realize that this is a way to really make an effect on, on people's lives every day.

00;26;56;07 - 00;27;25;24

Eric Beaton

And what makes me hopeful for the future is that this isn't just a wave of people that's going to stop now, a wave of change that's going to happen. We're building a whole new generation of people who understand that the roads need to change, to match how the rest of society is changing, and as much as changing any individual street matters to me, making sure that we're setting up the agency, setting up the world to be able to keep making that change is incredibly important. And that's part of what makes me excited for work every day.

00;27;25;27 - 00;27;44;04

Emily Weidenhof

Yeah, amazing. And definitely, I think a privilege that we all feel at transportation agencies is being able to change and improve the streets in the city we live in every day is such a fantastic, fantastic privilege and opportunity here.

00;27;44;08 - 00;27;45;15

Eric Beaton Yeah. Absolutely.

00;27;45;18 - 00;28;03;06

Emily Weidenhof

Great. Well, Eric, thank you so much. I really appreciate you taking the time. You have a tremendous portfolio with many demands, and we really appreciate your insight and thoughts about this incredibly important use of data in our work every day.

00;28;03;09 - 00;28;11;07

Eric Beaton

Thanks, it was great to be here. Any chance I have to be excited about data and all the ways we use it, I'm going to take that.

00;28;11;09 - 00;28;38;10

NYC DOT Commissioner Ydanis Rodriguez

Hi. My name is Ydanis Rodriguez, commissioner of the New York City Department of Transportation. Thank you for listening to Curb Enthusiasm by New York City DOT. This episode was produced by Michael Santos with video support from Sigurjon Gudjonsson, and Juan Vega. Theme music by Michael Santos. Curb Enthusiasm is available on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, and other major streaming platforms.

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