

Bicycle advocacy groups call for crackdown on double parking in Jersey City, beyond



By [Rebecca Panico](#) | [The Jersey Journal](#)

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JERSEY CITY – Twenty-two miles of bike lanes have been installed since Mayor Steve Fulop took office, but some bicycle advocates say motorists often ignore these lanes creating what they call unsafe and deadly conditions for cyclists and pedestrians.

Cars driving – and even parking – in bike lanes are a serious problem for cyclists, pedestrians and motorists alike, bike advocates say.

"All you have to do is go on Grove Street," said Christopher Englese, president and co-founder of Bike JC, an advocacy group for cyclists in Jersey City. "Because of the double parked cars in the bike lanes, the cyclist has to steer out into the actual road."

There are no specific laws regarding a motorist double parking in a bike lane in either Jersey City or New Jersey. State law only has [rules against double parking](#), and for Englese, he rarely sees these double parking laws being enforced locally.

"No one has told me of an instance where they've seen a cop ticket a person for either parking or driving in the bike lane," said Englese. "Nor have I witnessed an instance."

City spokeswoman Jennifer Morrill said that police do enforce double parking laws, but that state law needs to play some catch-up.

"Police issue tickets to vehicles that block bike lanes, however, state motor vehicle laws have yet to catch up with the biking culture," she said in an e-mail. "This is something we will address with state lawmakers as bike lanes should not only be a courtesy, but should be recognizable under the law to protect our residents."

Cyndi Steiner, executive director the New Jersey Bike & Walk Coalition, called the the state law on double parking "way out of date" and said it "needs to be overhauled." According to Steiner, each municipality would have to pass an ordinance to protect bicyclists, who operate under many of the same laws that vehicles do.

Last month, a bill in Philadelphia was proposed which would increase fines for cars double parked in bike lanes from \$50 to \$200.

There's no data available for the number of bicycle accidents in Jersey City, but **one study** from the Tri-State Transportation Campaign found that Hudson County was the most dangerous Northern New Jersey county for bicyclists from 2001 to 2011 with an average of 239 yearly bicycle crashes resulting in six fatal crashes during the 10-year span.

Last month, 8-year-old Jermaine Woodward Jr. was struck and killed by a vehicle in a hit-and-run on Bostwick Avenue. His family said he was **inside a bike lane looking to cross the street** when a speeding car crossed over the bike lane and hit him before fleeing the scene.

However a source with knowledge of the investigation has said Woodward was not in the bike lane at the time of impact.

The fatal hit-and-run accident of Woodward last month wasn't the only time Jersey City was racked by tragedy. In 2013, **Natalia Caicedo**, also known as Natasha, was killed by a hit-and-run driver on Marin Boulevard where there are still no bike lanes.

For Englese, he said that more signage, education and enforcement of the law are needed to prevent tragedy.

"It's a tragedy what happened to [Woodward Jr.]," Englese said. "I hope some positive can come out of this horrible incident. And hopefully we can honor him and others."