How a Brooklyn College physics major used science to solve transportation problems

Physics Department Colloquium
Tuesday, October 20 at 12:25pm
2143 Ingersoll Hall

Abstract
Sam Schwartz got his B.S. in Physics from Brooklyn College in 1969. Come to this Colloquium to learn how he took what he learned at BC to become NYC's Traffic Commissioner and Chief Engineer for Transportation. He will explain how Professor Brian Schwartz, CUNY physics professor and big brother, developed the equation: Science + Math + Cities = Traffic that helped launch Sam's career.

Sam's years as traffic commissioner, chief engineer, and now as president and CEO of Sam Schwartz Engineering (SSE) are recounted in STREET SMART: THE RISE OF CITIES AND THE FALL OF CARS. This Colloquium will give an outline of the book's presentation of the tenets of intelligent transportation and sustainable urban planning-from the simplest cobblestoned street to the brave new world of driverless cars and trains. STREET SMART combines rigorous historical scholarship with personal and entertaining recollections from his more than forty years working on planning intuitive transit networks in New York City.

Speaker biography
Mr. Schwartz is President and CEO of Sam Schwartz Engineering (SSE), a firm that specializes in transportation planning and engineering. He also writes columns on traffic for The New York Daily News, the NY Downtown Express and blogs for Engineering News Record. His most recent book, Street Smart: The Rise of Cities and The Fall of Cars was released in September, 2015 to critical acclaim. Previously Mr. Schwartz was New York City's Traffic Commissioner and was the Chief Engineer of the NYC Department of Transportation. He started his transportation career in the late 1960's as a NYC cabbie and joined the Traffic Department, as a junior engineer, in 1971. Mr. Schwartz specializes in creative problem solving for seemingly intractable situations. He is expert at getting people out of their cars and into other forms of transportation. He is also proficient at moving those people who remain in their cars more swiftly and safely. Mr. Schwartz has created many win-win-win situations whereby traffic moves better, pedestrians are safer and the community gains more sidewalk and green space. He's been called an Urban Alchemist for making grass grow from asphalt. Mr. Schwartz, often referred to by his nom de plume "Gridlock Sam," released the word "Gridlock" into the lexicon during the 1980 NYC Transit strike.