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City settles crash suit for \$7.4M

Costs from drunken Gold Coast accident now total \$16 million

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The city of Chicago has agreed to pay \$7.4 million to a woman hit by a city-owned pickup truck on a busy sidewalk.

With the approval of the latest settlement at the Daley Center on Thursday, the city's tab for the incident now stands at more than \$16 million in legal costs.

Streets and Sanitation Department employee Dwight Washington was speeding through the Gold Coast in his truck on May 21, 2011, when he jumped the curb at Cedar and Rush streets and hit a crowd of pedestrians on the sidewalk.

Washington's blood-alcohol content was more than twice the legal limit, and he pleaded guilty

to four counts of aggravated driving under the influence. He received a nine-year prison sentence.

As the truck careened toward her, 25-year-old nanny Jennifer Anton pushed her stroller, which was carrying a young child, away from the truck's path. While the child only suffered minor injuries, Anton was struck directly.

The crash broke bones in her hips and legs and tore the skin off her legs.

Anton, represented by Corboy & Demetrio P.C. partner Thomas A. Demetrio, filed a lawsuit against the city and Washington in Cook County Circuit Court a few days after the incident. The complaint alleged that the city was negligent in the supervision of its employee.

Circuit Judge Irwin J. Solganick entered the settlement Thursday following direct negotiations between Demetrio and city Corporation Counsel Stephen R. Patton.

Demetrio said his client is



Thomas A. Demetrio

happy to have some closure. Left with scars, Anton is 28, healthy and set to graduate from DePaul University this spring, he said.

"She's very lucky, to be honest," Demetrio said. "As bad as it was, it could have been a lot worse. She's glad to be among us."

While the case never went to

trial, Demetrio said the city agreed not to contest its liability in the case. Demetrio credited City Hall for learning from the incident to better monitor city employees and for sending a message that drinking on the job will not be tolerated.

"I think the city has learned," Demetrio said. "I'm impressed with both the mayor and the legal department."

Anton is one of at least four victims to receive compensation for the incident. In December 2012, the city settled with husband and wife Richard and Leann Chang for \$6.25 million. A Cook County jury awarded Stephen Dewart \$2.4 million for his injuries in September.

A separate lawsuit filed by the family of the child whom Anton was pushing in the stroller is still pending, Demetrio said.

City law department spokesman Roderick Drew could not be reached for comment.

The case is *Jennifer Anton v. City of Chicago, et al.*, No 2011 L 5260.