NYC Department of Transportation Testimony Before the
City Council Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
January 30, 2026

Good afternoon, Chair Abreu and members of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. I am Eric Beaton, Deputy Commissioner for Transportation, Planning, and Management. I am joined by Rick Rodriguez, Assistant Commissioner for Intergovernmental and Community Affairs. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of Mayor Mamdani and Commissioner Flynn about the Preconsidered T0165 legislation.

I know we're here to just testify on the bill today, but I'd be remiss if we didn't cheerlead our work. At DOT we work with and support more than 200 Open Streets locations Citywide, including a record high 72 Open Streets at schools across the City. The Open Streets program also includes temporary, holiday-specific Open Streets such as Halloween and Harvest-themed Trick-Or-Streets events through October, Holiday Open Streets on Fifth Avenue, and expansions of celebrated annual tradition of our Summer Streets, reaching over 400 blocks of car-free fun.

We partner with schools, community groups, and Business Improvement Districts to execute and program these streets Citywide. Our program empowers community partners to steward their communities and create new possibilities to reimagine public spaces for food and culture, recreation and education. We also partner with local businesses to ensure that loading, deliveries, and emergency access are coordinated throughout.

The Mamdani Administration and Commissioner Flynn have a deep belief in supporting this program and equitably expanding the use of our streets as public space. We look forward to continue growing our Open Streets program.

Legislation

Turning to the legislation before the Council today.

Preconsidered T2026-0165

First, Preconsidered T0165 legislation, sponsored by Council Member Joseph. This bill would modify the Open Streets program to offer activation opportunities on certain holidays outside of normal operating hours, including Memorial Day, Juneteenth, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Halloween, and other holidays or days with significant pedestrian traffic. It also requires

procedures by which community organizations may participate in or suggest new activation opportunities, which may also be offered on other days to the agency's discretion.

We support this bill, as we already extend the opportunity for programming on holidays, and look forward to extending opportunities for potential programming partners to activate our streets on even more days. We welcome the chance for additional conversations on how to enhance our efforts to think boldly about public space.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I would like to thank the Council for the opportunity to testify before you today. We would now be happy to answer any questions.

Activist Testimony in Support of NYC's Open Streets
January 30, 2026

Thank you to Chair Abreu and members of the Committee on Transportation for holding today's hearing.

My name is Ira Gershenhorn, and I express strong support for the Open Streets program and for Intro 2026-0165, which would create special activation opportunities for Open Streets on designated holidays and during peak pedestrian times.

Open Streets have been transformative for NYC neighborhoods. The program has empowered communities all over the city to reimagine how we use our streets and create much needed new public open space. Open Streets offer a critical community resource for socializing, cultural programming, and neighborhood connection — and **Intro 0270 would open up more of these opportunities during holidays and other significant dates, strengthening civic life when New Yorkers most need the extra space.**

Open streets have made our streets safer with fewer traffic crashes, they support small businesses with outdoor dining and increased foot traffic, and they've made it possible for countless students and young people to have outdoor space — too often a rare commodity in NYC's school system.

But for the Open Streets program to thrive, it needs investment, and I urge full and sustainable funding for the Open Streets program citywide in the upcoming city budget.

Volunteer organizations that manage Open Streets often operate with few resources, and current funding limitations restrict their capacity for planning, daily operations, and ongoing programming. Dedicated and sustained municipal funding is necessary to preserve and expand the program's reach.

As a New Yorker who walks, bikes, and rides transit, I know that access to public space is critical, and the proposed bill will make a tangible and meaningful difference on the streets of New York City by strengthening the highly successful Open Streets program.

Activist Testimony in Support of NYC's Open Streets
January 30, 2026

Thank you to Chair Abreu and members of the Committee on Transportation for holding today's hearing.

My name is Anna Berlanga, and I am here today to express strong support for the Open Streets program and for Intro 2026-0165, which would create special activation opportunities for Open Streets on designated holidays and during peak pedestrian times.

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My favorite days of the year, are essentially open streets days. I NEVER miss Summer Streets, which is a well funded and developed Open Street.

My niece and nephew learned to ride a bike on the Open Streets on Jennings Street in the Bronx. I spend summer days on the Open Street on 101st Street in East Harlem, supporting the surrounding local businesses. I spend a safe Halloween on the Open Streets on 120thStreet in Central Harlem - where Marcus meets Malcolm's Halloween Open Street gets bigger and bigger every year. This year, neighboring streets got into the fun.

Open Streets gives me a chance to spend money locally, in the community. It gives me the ability to be in community with my friends and neighbors. It gives me an opportunity to be outside.

Activist Testimony in Support of NYC's Open Streets
January 30, 2026

Thank you to Chair Abreu and members of the Committee on Transportation for holding today's hearing.

My name is Daphne Eviatar, and I am writing to express strong support for the Open Streets program and for Intro 2026-0165, which would create special activation opportunities for Open Streets on designated holidays and during peak pedestrian times.

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As a New Yorker who walks, bikes, and rides transit, I know that access to public space is critical, and the proposed bill will make a tangible and meaningful difference on the streets of New York City by strengthening the highly successful Open Streets program.

Testimony on 1/30/26 Transportation
& Infrastructure Committee Hearing

Open Plans writes today in regard to the Transportation & Infrastructure Committee Hearing on T165. Open Plans supports T165, and supports the growth of a healthy and joyful Open Streets program.

Open Streets provide a way to transform our streets into public space that all New Yorkers can enjoy. We have seen the massive success of holiday activations like Trick-or-Streets and the 5th Avenue Holiday Streets, and more locations should have the ability to activate their Open Streets during peak times. Other existing special activations like the Longest Table, and potential ones, like activations surrounding the 2026 World Cup, provide opportunities for residents to come together. Further, the Open Streets Full Closure: Schools program provides a safe place for pick-up and drop-off, as well as for important recreation time (it should be expanded and further funded; read our recommendations in our report Schools Out in the Streets!).

It is also important to note that despite these activations, Open Streets still sits in a funding limbo. Without consistent, baselined, and dedicated funding, the Open Streets program can vanish as we know it with little notice. That is why Open Plans supports Open Street volunteers' calls for $48 million for Open Streets over the next three years. With this money, the City could fund staffing at DOT to support Open Streets, directly fund vital community organizations that run Open Streets, and implement street improvement projects that make Open Streets work better. Together, this funding would ensure the program's longevity and provide important relief to volunteers that make the program run.

Respectfully,
Open Plans

Sara Lind
Co-Executive Director
sara@openplans.org

Jackson Chabot
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jacksonchabot@openplans.org

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Senior Policy & Legislative Analyst
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Loisaida Open Streets Community Coalition

Re: Int. 0270-2024 / 0165-2026: Special activation of the Open Streets program on certain holidays and time periods with significant pedestrian traffic.

The Loisaida Open Streets Community Coalition (LOSCC) is the grassroots DOT community partner for the Avenue B Open Street in Manhattan. As we enter a new era of governance, with a new Mayor; a new City Council Chair; a new Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chair; and a new Transportation Committee, we'd like to take this opportunity to offer insights on community-run Open Streets, which are each as unique as the neighborhoods they serve.

Some community-run Open Streets are many blocks long, and host informal activities of all kinds 7 days a week throughout the year, while others only operate on one or two days per week, or during certain seasons.

It's the latter that would benefit most from this legislation, as these are currently not allowed to operate (or apply for Full Closures as Open Streets partners) outside of their regularly scheduled operating hours.
The only exceptions to these limitations are the citywide events sponsored by DOT, such as Car Free Earth Day in April and Trick or Streets events in October. Expanding these opportunities is most welcome, but it is *the autonomy to operate on one-off days at the discretion of the Open Streets partner* that we expect this legislation to explicitly deliver.

The Avenue B Open Street has operated from 8am - 8pm 7 days a week since Memorial Day 2020. Like many of the community-run Open Streets that began during the pandemic, was run almost entirely with volunteer labor for nearly two years: placing barriers in the morning, monitoring them throughout the day and removing them at night, and have proven themselves more than capable.
When the DOT contractor now responsible for barrier placement is off-duty on a handful of holidays each year, LOSCC volunteers have always stepped in to give the crew well-deserved time off, while ensuring road conditions remain consistent in the interest of safety. We request that this legislation explicitly state that *OS partners be permitted to place, monitor and remove barriers on holidays that the DOT contractor does not perform these functions*.

Taking into consideration the above comments, LOSCC supports this legislation.

www.socialists.us
(202) 455-0510 - info@socialists.us – https://socialists.us

New York City Council testimony on committee on Transportation and Infrastructure – January 30, 2026

My name is Theo Chino. I am the First National Secretary of the Social Democrats of America, the socialist faction within the Democratic Party.

I am here today to request that intro 0165-2026 bill be amended to formally include **United Nations Week** as part of the Open Streets holiday calendar.

Over the years, I have repeatedly reached out to my Portuguese socialist comrade, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres, to encourage the inclusion of local Democratic and Republican County committee members in drafting mitigation proposals for UN Week.

The purpose of this outreach has been to alleviate both the disruption and the financial burden that the United Nations' presence places on the residents of New York City during the General Assembly.

The goal has always been simple: to reduce disruption to New Yorkers and to address the significant financial and social costs imposed that week on our city residents.

As a socialist who believes wholeheartedly in the mission of the United Nations—an institution led by a fellow socialist—it pains me to say this; but when the security of international delegates is consistently prioritized over the daily lives of New Yorkers, we must speak honestly about the consequences.

UN Week places a heavy burden on our city, and visa denials imposed by our president routinely prevent full delegations from attending, reducing the effectiveness of UN Week when hosted here.

At the same time, New York City absorbs enormous costs through NYPD overtime, extensive street closures, and economic losses to local businesses. These impacts extend well beyond the boundaries of Community Board 6.

As elected officials and civic leaders, our responsibility is first and foremost to the residents of this city.

While global diplomacy is important, it cannot come at the ongoing expense of New Yorkers' mobility, livelihoods, and quality of life.

The United Nations' Geneva campus offers a secure, enclosed environment that allows diplomacy to proceed without visa discrimination, without excessive security disruptions, and without imposing costs on our residents.

If New York is to continue hosting UN Week, it must be done in a way that respects the people who live and work here.

That is why it is essential that **Intro 0165-2026** explicitly recognize UN Week as an Open Streets holiday.

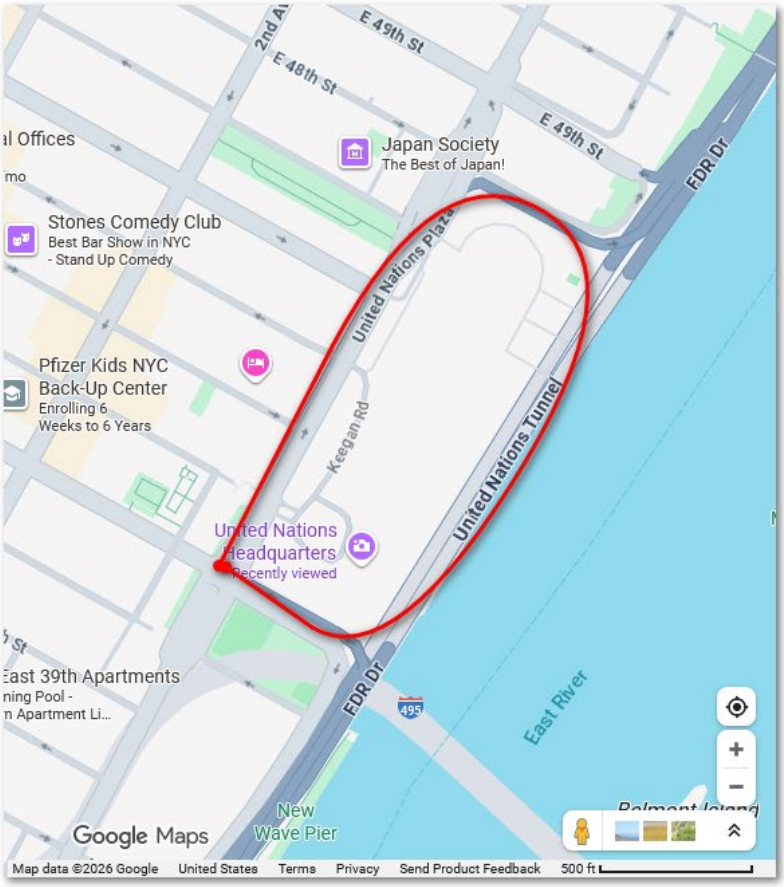
This would allow the city to plan proactively, manage traffic responsibly, support businesses across the tri-state area, and reduce the burden placed on residents during this period.

We invite any person that want to discuss this topic to visit our website at https://socialists.us/policies and click on the document **"Divesting NYPD resources from the United Nations General Assembly and ending street closures in Manhattan and Queens during UN Week"**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify, and for your consideration of this amendment.

Scaled comparison map of United Nations compounds

New York City



Geneva

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Divesting NYPD resources from the United Nations General Assembly and ending street closures in Manhattan and Queens during UN Week

Draft Proposal by Theo Chino, January 4th, 2026

Every year in September, the United Nations convenes its General Assembly in New York City under a security model that operates in near-total isolation from the city itself.

This approach generates extraordinary overtime costs for the New York Police Department, placing an excessive and recurring burden on the New York City budget and on Upper East Side residents who bear the brunt of the disruption.

The situation has reached an unacceptable level.

In 2026, conditions deteriorated to the point that the President of France was physically blocked by the motorcade of the President of the United States—an incident that symbolized the dysfunction and absurdity of the current system.[1]

Since the terrorist attacks of 2001, security measures surrounding the General Assembly have expanded continuously without proportional accountability. As a result, street closures now affect not only Manhattan but the entire metropolitan region, with cascading consequences for working- and low-income families as far away as Pennsylvania.

For residents of the affected neighborhoods, this annual event has become a suspension of normal civic life: blocked streets, disrupted public transportation, restricted access to homes and businesses, and a level of police presence that extends far beyond ordinary crime prevention.

In 2022, the Social Democrats of America formally reached out to António Guterres, as well as to the President of the Socialist International, Greek Prime Minister George Papandreou, and Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez, seeking dialogue on how to bridge the widening gap between local residents and this international institution. No response was ever acknowledged.

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[1] https://www.nytimes.com/video/us/100000010416097/french-president-stopped-trump-motorcade.html

We are therefore calling on our Mélenchonist and Progressive International comrade, Mayor Zohran Mamdani, to initiate a public discussion with the community boards most directly impacted by the United Nations General Assembly.

This discussion must address two immediate issues: first, ending New York City's practice of providing and funding NYPD services beyond regular public safety patrols for foreign delegations; and second, refusing the routine closure of public streets to accommodate diplomatic motorcades.

If the United Nations is unable—or unwilling—to conduct its General Assembly without imposing extraordinary costs and disruptions on New York City residents, a viable alternative already exists. A sister United Nations compound has been built in Geneva, and the organization is fully capable of holding its 2026 General Assembly there.

New York City should not be required to indefinitely subsidize an international institution at the expense of its own residents.

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Monday, July 02, 2024

His Excellency António Guterres,
United Nations Secretary
405 E 42nd St
New York, NY 10017
United Nations

Your Excellency,

I want to request that you invite the 2,000 members of the New York City County Committee at the United Nations to present the upcoming 2024 General Assembly agenda.

These 2,000 low-level Democrats and Republicans represent every neighborhood in the city. To them, the only thing the United Nations represent is inconvenience.

The United Nations have yet to reach out to them to explain why it is essential for them to be inconvenienced. These 2,000 New Yorkers have a great deal of influence on the national policies of the United States.

As the leader of the Social Democrats of America, I think it's essential for your institution to reach out to them and present your agenda.

In solidarity,
Hasta la victoria, ¡siempre!

Theo Chino

***We are Socialists**; therefore, we believe in **Free Education**, **Universal Health Care**, **Anti-Death Penalty**, **Pro-Abortion**, **Universal Basic Income**, the **Right to Unionize**, the sanctity of the **Separation of Church and State**, and the belief that the Government should make life bearable for all and ensure citizens' Liberties.*

Thank you to Chair Abreu and members of the Committee on Transportation for holding today's hearing.

My name is Alan Mukamal, and I am writing to express strong support for the Open Streets program and for Intro 2026-0165, which would create special activation opportunities for Open Streets on designated holidays and during peak pedestrian times.

Open Streets have been transformative for NYC neighborhoods. The program has empowered communities all over the city to reimagine how we use our streets and create much needed new public open space. Open Streets offer a critical community resource for socializing, cultural programming, and neighborhood connection — and **Intro 0270 would open up more of these opportunities during holidays and other significant dates, strengthening civic life when New Yorkers most need the extra space.**

Open streets have made our streets safer with fewer traffic crashes, they support small businesses with outdoor dining and increased foot traffic, and they've made it possible for countless students and young people to have outdoor space — too often a rare commodity in NYC's school system.

But for the Open Streets program to thrive, it needs investment, and I urge full and sustainable funding for the Open Streets program citywide in the upcoming city budget.

Volunteer organizations that manage Open Streets often operate with few resources, and current funding limitations restrict their capacity for planning, daily operations, and ongoing programming. Dedicated and sustained municipal funding is necessary to preserve and expand the program's reach.

As a New Yorker, *who owns a car,* but chooses to walk, bike, and ride transit, whenever possible, I know that access to public space is critical, and the proposed bill will make a tangible and meaningful difference on the streets of New York City by strengthening the highly successful Open Streets program.

Alan Mukamal

[redacted]

Brooklyn, NY 11231

[redacted]

Thank you to Chair Abreu and the members of the Committee on Transportation for the opportunity to be here today and for holding this hearing.

My name is Carol Krakowski and I'm here to express my strong support for the Open Streets program and for Intro 2026-0165, which would create special activation opportunities on designated holidays and during peak pedestrian times.

Open Streets have been truly transformative for neighborhoods across New York City, and for me, that transformation is deeply personal. The Vanderbilt Open Streets program was one of the things that helped me find community in my neighborhood. Through Open Streets, I met my neighbors in ways I honestly didn't know were possible in a city as large and fast-paced as New York. Those connections made my neighborhood feel like home, and they played a real role in my decision to stay in New York because of the community ties I've built there.

Open Streets have also created vital public space for socializing, cultural programming, and everyday connection. Intro 0270 would expand these opportunities on holidays and other key dates—times when New Yorkers most need extra space to gather, celebrate, and be together.

The benefits extend beyond community building. Open Streets have made our streets safer, with fewer traffic crashes, supported small businesses through increased foot traffic and outdoor dining, and created much-needed outdoor space for students and young people—something that is far too rare within New York City's school system.

I'm also a small business owner in Manhattan, and I know firsthand how financially strained small businesses are. Programs like Open Streets don't run on goodwill alone. We need government support to keep them operating sustainably. Many of the volunteer organizations that manage Open Streets are doing incredible work with very limited resources, and current funding constraints make planning, daily operations, and ongoing programming extremely challenging.

For the Open Streets program to truly thrive, it needs full and sustained funding citywide in the upcoming budget. Dedicated municipal investment is essential to preserve and expand a program that has already proven its value.

As a New Yorker who walks, bikes, and relies on transit, I know how critical access to public space is to daily life. This bill would make a meaningful and lasting difference on our streets by strengthening an already successful program that brings people together and supports local businesses across New York City.

My name is Daniel Giansante, and I am writing in strong support of Intro 0270 and the Open Streets program in general.

I cannot overemphasize how amazing the Open Streets program has been for my neighborhood of Prospect Heights. The Vanderbilt Open Street creates such a vibrant, celebratory atmosphere. It really brings the community together, and it allows for artistic performances, live music, group dance lessons, and other activities in a shared cultural space. It also increases the number of people going to local businesses, and it especially boosts the attractiveness of outdoor dining. The decrease in traffic alone is also a great respite during spring and summer weekend evenings.

It would be lovely if we could have Open Streets on holidays, and at other times when it is likely that there will be strong public appetite for it.

More broadly, the Open Streets program really needs more City funding. The Vanderbilt hours have been greatly curtailed as City funding has dried up, despite efforts to raise funds privately and the use of volunteers to help re-open the street to traffic at the conclusion of each day. It would be such a shame for the City to squander this opportunity to invest in livable streets and community vitality.

Gregory Feliu's Testimony in Support of NYC's Open Streets
January 30, 2026

Thank you to Chair Abreu and members of the Committee on Transportation for holding today's hearing.

My name is Gregory Feliu, and I want to express strong support for the Open Streets program and for Intro 2026-0165, which would create special activation opportunities for Open Streets on designated holidays and during peak pedestrian times.

Open Streets have been transformative for NYC neighborhoods. The program has empowered communities all over the city to utilize streets in ways that are currently impossible due to the negative effects of parking and car traffic. Open Streets offer an amazing community resource for socializing, cultural programming, and neighborhood connection — and **Intro 0270 would open up more of these opportunities during holidays and other significant dates, strengthening civic life when New Yorkers most need the extra space.**

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As a New Yorker who walks, bikes, and rides transit, I know that access to public space is critical, and the proposed bill will make a tangible and meaningful difference on the streets of New York City by strengthening the highly successful Open Streets program.

Testimony in Support of NYC's Open Streets
January 30, 2026

Thank you to Chair Abreu and members of the Committee on Transportation for the opportunity to provide my perspective on Open Streets.

My name is Joshua McDaniel, and **I am writing to express strong support for the Open Streets program and for Intro 2026-0165**, which would create special activation opportunities for Open Streets on designated holidays and during peak pedestrian times.

Open Streets programs near me include Vanderbilt Ave, Franklin Ave, Willoughby Ave, Atlantic Antic, and Summer Streets among others. Each of these Open Streets programs provided my family a safe way to safely congregate with family and friends, enjoy the outdoors and NYC summer, and support local businesses. Having a young kid, we especially enjoyed street hydrant opening days, drawing with chalk, and running and scootering in the open space. The open streets program made these activities safe and gave us space.

Open Streets have been transformative for NYC neighborhoods. The program has empowered communities all over the city to reimagine how we use our streets and create much needed new public open space. Open Streets offer a critical community resource for socializing, cultural programming, and neighborhood connection — and **Intro 0270 would open up more of these opportunities during holidays and other significant dates, strengthening civic life when New Yorkers most need the extra space.**

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Testimony in Support of NYC's Open Streets
January 30, 2026

Thank you to Chair Abreu and members of the Committee on Transportation for holding today's hearing.

My name is Ojus Doshi, and I am here today to express strong support for the Open Streets program and for Intro 2026-0165, which would create special activation opportunities for Open Streets on designated holidays and during peak pedestrian times.

Open Streets have been transformative for NYC neighborhoods. The program has empowered communities all over the city to reimagine how we use our streets and create much needed new public open space. Living very close to Vanderbilt Ave. Open Streets in Brooklyn, it is always a joy to experience people relaxing, eating, children playing, and the lively music and socializing. It has shown me firsthand that Open Streets offer a critical community resource for socializing, cultural programming, and neighborhood connection — and **Intro 0270 would open up more of these opportunities during holidays and other significant dates, strengthening civic life when New Yorkers most need the extra space.**

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As a New Yorker who walks, bikes, and rides transit, I know that access to public space is critical, and the proposed bill will make a tangible and meaningful difference on the streets of New York City by strengthening the highly successful Open Streets program.

Thank you,
Ojus Doshi

Testimony in Support of NYC's Open Streets
January 30, 2026

Thank you to Chair Abreu and members of the Committee on Transportation for holding today's hearing.

My name is Phillip Godzin, and I am here today to express strong support for the Open Streets program and for Intro 2026-0165, which would create special activation opportunities for Open Streets on designated holidays and during peak pedestrian times.

Open Streets have been transformative for NYC neighborhoods because they create something our city desperately needs: **more public open space**. They give communities a safe, welcoming place to gather—whether that's for informal neighbor-to-neighbor connection, cultural programming, family activities, mutual aid, or small community events that simply don't have room anywhere else.

In my own experience, **Vanderbilt Avenue in Brooklyn** is a clear example of why this program matters. On Open Streets days, the corridor feels meaningfully different: **more lively, more social, and more connected**. People linger, meet friends, bring kids outside, and participate in community activities that wouldn't happen on a typical traffic-dominated day. That shift—from a street primarily for cars to a place primarily for people—strengthens neighborhood life in a way that's hard to replicate with any other policy.

Open Streets also support local businesses in a direct, visible way. When Vanderbilt Avenue is open, **foot traffic increases**, and that steady flow of people is beneficial for restaurants, cafés, and shops alike. Businesses gain more customers, more visibility, and more opportunities to engage with neighbors—creating a positive cycle where the street feels more active, and the activity supports the businesses that make the neighborhood vibrant.

Open Streets also improve quality of life by making our streets feel safer and calmer, and by providing space where New Yorkers—especially young people—can be outside in their own communities. In a dense city where open space is limited and often unevenly distributed, these car-free public spaces are a practical and powerful tool for equity and public health.

But for the Open Streets program to thrive, it needs investment, and I urge full and sustainable funding for the Open Streets program citywide in the upcoming city budget.

Volunteer organizations that manage Open Streets often operate with few resources, and current funding limitations restrict their capacity for planning, daily operations, and ongoing programming. Dedicated and sustained municipal funding is necessary to preserve and expand the program's reach—and to ensure Open Streets can reliably deliver the community benefits New Yorkers have come to depend on.

As a New Yorker who walks and rides transit, I know that access to public space is critical, and the proposed bill will make a tangible and meaningful difference on the streets of New York City by strengthening the highly successful Open Streets program.

Testimony in Support of NYC's Open Streets
January 30, 2026

Thank you to Chair Abreu and members of the Committee on Transportation for holding today's hearing.

My name is Ryan, and I am here today to express strong support for the Open Streets program and for Intro 2026-0165.

Open Streets are our linear backyards, our safe spaces to both move through the city without fear and linger. They are an essential resource that deserves reinforcement and expansion across the city.

I urge you to vote for this bill.

Thank you to Chair Abreu and members of the Committee on Transportation for holding today's hearing.

My name is Steve Flack, and I am here today to express strong support for the Open Streets program and for Intro 0270-2024, which would create special activation opportunities for Open Streets on designated holidays and during peak pedestrian times.

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From: Joan Reisman-Brill
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Please don"t bring back year-round outdoor dining in the streets
Date: Thursday, February 19, 2026 3:51:51 PM

[redacted]

On February 5, I am looking out my window at the piles of snow and trash and feeling grateful that there are no outdoor dining sheds exacerbating the already messy situation. But now I hear you're planning to bring back year-round outdoor dining sheds. I assume these will not be restricted to sidewalks but also in the streets.

Please reconsider! No one wants to eat outdoors in the cold weather. And we need our traffic lanes, bike lanes, and parking spots all year. I have no objection to year-round outdoor dining on sidewalks (although I think it's ridiculous--no one uses it in the cold months), but I really object to street dining eating up (pun intended) our thoroughfares.

It also puts everyone in harm's way when there's a bike lane between the restaurant and the outdoor dining shed. Why not just set them up on a busy highway?

If you really are going to push this through, I hope the fees the city collects will be high enough to discourage most and bring in substantial funds from those willing to pay.

And maybe the funds could be used for public toilets, which are disgracefully lacking in NYC.

Joan Reisman-Brill

East 64th Street, Manhattan

RE: Int. 0270-2024 / 0165-2026: **Special activation of the Open Streets program on certain holidays and time periods with significant pedestrian traffic.**

I am a volunteer Open Streets organizer and I support the proposed legislation.

The Open Streets program has empowered communities all over the city to reimagine their local streetscape and provided for the (temporary) transformation of city streets into beloved new public open space. It has allowed community-based organizations to make our streets safer, provide free programming, daily maintenance, outdoor dining, and support for local businesses.

As an Open Streets organizer, I support legislation that further formalizes the Open Streets program, especially if it helps make the program more accessible and flexible. The proposed legislation would facilitate running Open Streets outside of a regular schedule. It would be incredibly helpful to add further flexibility and allow one-off days in addition to designated holidays. One obvious example that comes to mind, is Pride in June — which is not technically a holiday, yet certainly a significant event in NYC, especially for the LGBTQ community. Outside of designated holidays it is currently virtually impossible to add a one-off day to the Open Streets schedule. The proposed legislation would further codify existing practice and extend it beyond designated holidays.

In sum, I strongly support this legislation to allow flexibility around one-off additions to the Open Streets schedule, and want to emphasize the importance of making sure it is accessible not just for designated holidays but also for important community events such as Pride.

Furthermore, I want to take this opportunity to reiterate a point Open Streets organizers and supporters have been making for years now: in order for this program to survive and thrive, it needs to be fully funded.

Countless surveys and petitions show the widespread support for Open Streets, and just today the New York State Comptroller released a report showing Open Streets lead to substantial job growth. The Council passed legislation to make the program permanent in 2021, and in 2024 DOT amended the traffic rules to further codify the program. One key piece is missing though — and that is the money to pay for all of this! Instead, the program relies on endless unpaid volunteer labor by organizers such as myself. It relies on nonprofit community organizations scraping together money to run bare-bones operations. This is not sustainable.

Since pandemic financial support ended, the City has decreased the funding to community Open Streets partners — the consequences are that the program has shrunken in size and become less equitable. Relying on provisional equipment and volunteer labor is not sustainable. Long-term, these great street transformations need to be implemented with infrastructure. Infrastructure investments reduce the amount of labor required to run the Open Streets, and thereby reduce operating costs. However, many of the promised street improvement projects and capital redesigns have stalled, due to lack of staffing and resources at DOT.

Without new, dedicated funding, the program won't survive. I am asking the new administration and this newly installed committee to finally fully fund the Open Streets program, which should cover:

- Staffing of DOT positions that support Open Streets work;
- Directly funding community organizations that operate Open Streets;
- Fast-tracking the implementation of street improvement projects on Open Streets corridors.

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 165-2026
☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 1-30-2026

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: THEO CHINO

Address:

I represent: Social Democrats of America

Address:

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 1/30/26

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Rick Rodriguez

Address: DOT

I represent:

Address:

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. T2026-0165 Res. No. _____
☑ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 1/30/26

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Eric Beatr

Address: 55 Water St

I represent: M/C DOT

Address: Same

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms